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POLITICS OF URBAN POOR : A STUDY OF NEIGHBOURHOOD ASSOCIATION
IN INTERACTION WITH LOCAL ADMINISTRATION IN
A LOW-COST HOUSING COMMUNITY, HONG KONG

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Thesis

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ABSTRACT

During the past nine years, the Tai Hang Tung and Nam Shan People's Committee (THTPC) have been bargaining with the Government for getting more and better urban services. After reviewing the work done by the THTPC, four events - Toilet Issue in 1972, Redevelopment Issue in 1977, Opening of Rooftops in 1978 and Nine Years Free Education Signature Campaign in 1974 were chosen as examples for the studies and were summarised under following categories of events : (1) local environmental-betterment, (2) local policy-alternation, (3) societal environmental-betterment, and (4) societal policy-alternation.

In this thesis, the power tactics used by the THTPC and the local administration are discussed. The four said cases indicate that the selection of issues depends on firstly its broad beneficiary constituency, secondly its immediate, specific and feasible demands. In the bargaining process, the more urgent the issue, the higher the cost the beneficiary constituency would have to pay. The more diverse the action groups, the less likely will the militant tactics be approved and finally, the more apathetic the public, the more likely will the authority use the ignoring tactics.

It is expected that when the living environment

is gradually improved, less and less problems will affect the estate as a whole. The THTPC would thus face the problems of diminishing beneficiary constituency. Moreover, with the recent upsurge of coalescent actions of communities, there will be a problem of concordance of cooperation among the communities. The clientele, the social workers and the agencies froming these coalitions will not only have discrepancies in their demands, in their choice of course of actions but will also face the danger of internal discordance within the clientele, social workers and agencies themselves.

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CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

Research Problem

During the past ten years, it has been increasing apparent that a large number of collective actions, which may be community-based as well as occupation-based has mushroomed and drawn much public concern in Hong Kong. There were, for example, the Issue of the Yau Ma Ti Boat People, the Issue of Yan Yee Village, the Destruction of private housing for the Mass Transit Railway at Sai Lau Lok in Tsuen Wan, the Re-development Project at the Tai Hang Tung Estate, the Strike of Certificated Teachers, and the industrial actions of mid-wives and postmen. The strategies they have employed may serve as action models for the "late-comers", such as the ways of making petitions to the Governor or the government departments involved, seeking support from the influential people, inviting some Members of Parliament to pay a visit or attend their mass assemblies, conducting press conferences, and flying to Britain to seek for support from high ranking administrators or politicians or interest groups.

Some important issues arose from the fact that the construction of low-cost public housing to accommodate the ever-increasing population had been on the agenda for several years. At last, the Government set a

"Ten Year Housing Plan" to solve part of the problem. Despite the erection of public housing, some old public housing estate have been considered as not suitable for habitation and the Government thus decided to demolish them or reconstruct them. In other words, the Government has been experiencing a dual pressure for construction and reconstruction. Competition for the scarce resources between the Government and the indigenous residents in the low-cost housing districts is predictable, and more and more community actions may emerge. Therefore, studies on these imminent crises are necessary. It is also important to understand the politics of the urban poor in dealing with the local administration. What do they want ? How do they get what they want ? And how effective are their strategies ?

Related Research

The available studies of urban poor concerned with the following aspects. Firstly, putting the urban poor into the world system, the emergence of urban poor especially those migrant labour in the developing nations could be explained by the chain of national difference between the rich and poor nations, the regional difference between the urban and rural areas. Rural population was pull and push to the urban sector

and became urban poor.

Secondly, some scholars focused on the internal differentiation among the poor which was classified as labour aristocracy and migrant labour. They engaged in the controversy of whether the working class as a whole, as Marx predicted, or the migrant labour who was described as lumper proletariat was the motive force of revolution.

Thirdly, some urban studies spotlighted the problem of political participation of the urban migrant poor. Joan M. Nelson examined four patterns of political participation of the poor. The first was patron-client links which ensured some basic needs and minimum security. The second was special-interest associations, rising levels of education and spreading commitment to the city were perhaps the most important trends of this type. Ethnic association was the third one, it concerned with jobs, loans, and other assistance for their urban members. Finally, parties were likely to try to use the channels to gain control and support. Nelson discussed the incentive to organize, i.e. the commitment, physical and legal status of the neighborhood, the capacity to organize, i.e. community cohesion, history of the locale and leadership, and incentive for political participation, i.e. accessibility of government¹.

Finally, social workers interested in the operational strategies-- consensus, conflict, and negotiation, of the community organization. Cox and others interested in identifying community needs, utilizing existing community resources, planning conference, bringing innovation, exercising influence through lobbying, administering and evaluating programmes². Cloward and Piven proposed a strategy of a massive drive to recruit the poor onto the welfare rolls³. Saul Alinsky was famous as the community activist, he stressed the effectiveness of conflict strategy in bargaining with the authority⁴. Based on the research in Chicago's South Austin, Robert Bailey focused on the contextual factors making possible the emergence of Alinsky organizations, the features which determined the organization's success, and significance of the organization for their members and society. He found that the emergence of the Alinsky organization depended on four factors. First, the local politicians failed in solving community problems. Second, most local residents felt alienated from and powerless to affect government policy through conventional channels. Third, churches participated in and had the resources to tackle community problems. Finally, the middle-class community with a substantial number of residents had both the orientation and personal resources needed for

effective social participation. Four features accounting for much of the success were (1) independent and multiple funding sources, (2) expertise as organizer, (3) grassroots approach and (4) the use of protest strategy. To the society, the organization brought more intangible changes than tangible changes. To members, the organization enhanced personal radicalization which on the one hand led to an overly simple image of society and, on the other hand resulted in a greater willingness to use conflict and to challenge authority⁵.

Most writing on this topic base either on the developing nations or the War on Poverty in America, which are quite different from Hong Kong in terms of the social and political structure. Since community development in Hong Kong is a rather new programme, only a few researches have been done on this topic.

Having compared the conditions of urban community centres and community development of Hong Kong with those of Singapore, Graham Riches concluded that in Hong Kong community development was a tool of community control rather than a means of maximized actualization of community potentials⁶.

Chan Tat-choi evaluated the work of voluntary organizations on community development in the housing estates of Hong Kong. In his study Chan found that in the old resettlement areas voluntary agencies worked for environmental improvement while their counter-

parts in the new estates exerted themselves in facilities and service improvement. He identified some characteristics of the highly successful projects, such as small service centres, community action orientation, use of campaign and contest strategies, community-wide issues employed, etc⁷.

Moreover, a few Masters' theses in the Social Work Division of the University of Hong Kong have focused on community development and community organization. Cheung Wai-king was concerned with how to identify local leaders at the initial stage of community development. She discovered that community development had acted as an unofficial channel through which people could express their opinions about the problems in the community and that the active participants in community development were usually groups of lesser social mobility⁸.

Mak Hoi-wah analysed two community organizations, the Society for the Community Organization (hereafter as SoCo) and the Tsuen Wan, Tai Wo Hau, Kwai Chung Ecumenical Community Development Project, in terms of their organizational goals, decision structure and programmes and strategies of intervention. The main functions of the organizations were to organize people at the grass roots for change. The programme and strategies

they used were that they were just concerned with organizing people to change. They were neither a service centre, nor did they work on individual problems. Originally, SoCO intervened in some issues affecting the community and tried to organize people to fight for their own interests. It held mass meetings in order to mobilize the residents' involvement and publicize the action and demands through mass media. It formed people's organizations or people's committees afterwards. Some institutional changes such as the financial self-balancing principle of the Housing Department, the managerial combination of low-cost housing and resettlement areas and the redevelopment project in the Mark I and II public housing areas were all intercommunity problems in which joint effort was needed⁹.

In a research on the potential for and limitations of community development of association at the district level, So Man-yum pointed out that Mutual Aid Committee (hereafter as MAC) formed a bridge between people and the Government and served as a strong resource for government planning. He also pointed out that campaign strategy was a function in an apathetic society. But being in the custody of the City District Office (hereafter as CDO), an MAC enjoyed very limited autonomy and it was

an imposed body rather than an indigenously generated one. Furthermore, there was no horizontal integration among the MACs¹⁰.

Fung Ho-lup was interested in the vertical public participation between people and the Government. He identified two types of participation: cooptation-instrumental and independent-consummatory. Cooptative-instrumental participation referred to a cooptative process in the machinery of the organization, the aim of which was instrumental in furthering the plans, goals, and survival of the organization. Independent-consummatory participation emphasized the independence of the participants whose activities might lie outside the given frame of reference of action. The word "consummatory" meant expressive activities which were aimed at more immediate satisfaction or release of feeling. He thought that it was premature to speculate anything about the future trend of public participation in Hong Kong that was so uncertain and ambiguous.¹¹

Objectives

From these studies, I have found that they focused on the latent political function of community development and community organization, the community organization structure, or the vertical participation model. Few of them have been concerned about the interplay between the

resident associations and the local administration in dealing with the problem of urban services delivery. Therefore, I have chosen this topic as my research problem.

As one of the most outstanding community organizations, the Tai Hang Tung People's Committee (hereafter as THTPC) has gained the image that it is a successful body in mobilizing tenants to press the Government to improve their environment and organizing tenants to participate in several community activities. Hence, I have selected it as ^a case for my research and what has interested me most was the community action. Why could some grass-root organizations be established in some particular communities and how have they operated? What has been its role in striving for urban services? For most of the community actions, the target group has been the Government. It is important to ask how the Government has reacted to these demands. What have been the results after the negotiations between the suppliers and the demanders?

In order to disclose the interaction pattern between the Tai Hang Tung People's Committee and the local administration, I assume that both parties vary their tactics according to: (1) the nature of the issue;

(2) the population being served. Local administration is defined as the Government offices which are involved in the urban services delivery system and are responsible for the administration in particular areas. After reviewing a number of newspaper reports, I found that the issues that broke out in the past years were over the matters of toilet repair, leaking roof, rubbish gathering, roof garden, hot-blaz effect on the top roof, splitting and expending of family tenantship, low rent policy, nine-year free education, petition to the Governor and the government departments involved, and joining the Committee on Public Housing Policy in Hong Kong". According to the nature of the issues and the population served, I have summarized these events into four types: (1) local environmental-betterment, (2) societal environment-betterment, (3) local policy-alteration and (4) societal policy-alteration (see the following table).

		<u>Nature of Issue</u>	
		Environmental- Betterment	Policy- Alteration
Population served	Local	1	3
	Societal	2	4

The environmental-betterment programme is the programme that is designed for improvement of the physical environment. The policy-alteration programme is a programme aiming at changing the plan of action, statement of aims and ideals of the Government. Services whose beneficiaries are confined to the population living in the Kowloon Tsai community are defined as local service programmes, whereas the societal service programmes provide services to more than one community.

Since the four types of programme involve different government departments and affect different groups of people, it is my general postulate that the pattern of interaction between the THTPC and the local administration is conditioned by both the nature of issues concerned and the population being served. A case has been selected from each type of programme for analysing the different interaction patterns.

Methods

Not many community studies have been done in Hong Kong. Among them, there were only a few on Tai Hang Tung. Some were on the social life, nursery needs and employment situations. Others were on the transportation system. Most of the surveys had been carried out between 1965-1966. There was a few of them

on Tai Hang Tung in the 1970s.

Since all the four selected cases occurred during the past few years, it is impossible for me to utilize the field technique of participant observation to report them. Documentary analysis and in-depth interviews have therefore been undertaken to recall the whole story.

Documents on which I have relied heavily are:

- (1) the official letters of the local administration and of the Tai Hang Tung and Nam Shan People's Committee (THTPC) from which I have traced the negotiation process between these two bodies,
- (2) the then reports in newspapers which have helped me to identify the publicity of the issues,
- (3) the press releases of relevant government departments in which the Government revealed its opinions of a particular event.
- (4) "The Voice of Tai Hang Tung" which is a community newsletter edited by the THTPC,
- (5) the data about three blockson the verge of demolition which were collected by the Hong Kong Housing Authority between late 1979 and early 1980,
- (6) the publications of the Society for Community Organization, including the monthly project reports

and annual reports.

The in-depth interviews have been in process from July 1980 to April 1981. The interviewees were some representatives of the THTPC, some ex- and present staff workers of the SoCO, social workers interested in community development and some local administrative staff and leaders of the local organizations. A number of residents of Tai Hang Tung Estate who had participated in the selected issues have also been interviewed. Interviewees were asked to give their version of the events and the organizations involved.

In addition to formal interviews, I roved over the Tai Hang Tung and Nam Shan Estates, chatted with the shopowners and the residents to understand their perception of the local organizations and the local administration.

Altogether I had 44 interviewees. They included:

- 6 representatives of the THTPC,
- 5 ex- and present staff of the SoCO,
- 8 social workers interested in community development
(3 of them had worked in Tai Hang Tung before),
- 6 officials of the local administration,
- 14 residents and shopowners of the Tai Hang Tung and
Nam Shan Estates,

- 3 leaders of the local organizations and
- 2 professionals who were interested in community development.

Footnotes (Chapter I Introduction)

- (1) Nelson, Joan M., Access to Power: Politics and the Urban Poor in Developing Nations, Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1979.
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CHAPTER 11 LOCAL ADMINISTRATION

The Housing Authority, Past and Present.

A huge influx of immigration from China boosted the population in Hong Kong to an estimated 2,000,000 in 1954. The accommodation available in Hong Kong was insufficient for such a drastic increase. People crowded in old tenements and established squatter areas. At that time the Resettlement Department dealt mainly with the fire victims by providing them substandard dwellings of 24 sq. ft. per person in the 7-storey buildings. The housing schemes administered by the Hong Kong Housing Society and the Hong Kong Model Housing Society, though successful, were insufficient to solve the problem.

The Housing Authority was therefore set up on April 1, 1954 to provide flats, of good basic standard and at as low a rent as possible, for the low income dwellers in the tenements and the squatters. It was under the Housing Division of the Urban Service Department. It was composed of all the members of the Urban Council together with not more than three persons appointed by the Governor. Its principal executive officer, the Commissioner for Housing, was also appointed by the Governor. The Authority was subject to general Government Control. The Government granted it land at half upset price and loaned it at a low interest rate.

In addition to the housing estates built by the Authority, the Authority started to manage the government Low Cost Housing on a "no profit no loss" basis in 1963. All expenses were fully reimburseable from the *Treasury*.

On December 18, 1972, the Governor announced a 10-year Housing Programme. A new Housing Authority was set up to give this programme the necessary support and trust. This new Housing Authority took over all the authority and functions that were previously possessed by the Resettlement Department, the original Housing Authority and the Housing Board. As a result, all the public housing estates including the resettlement estates, such as the Tai Hang Tung Resettlement Estate which was originally managed by the Resettlement Department, came under the management of the new Housing Authority¹.

This Housing Authority is chaired by the Secretary for Housing. It comprises thirteen unofficials, eight of whom are Urban Councillors and six officials. All of them are appointed by the Governor². There are six standing committees dealing with its six functions - building, estate management, operations, finance, home ownership and appeals. The Housing Authority is a policy-making body with the Housing Department as its executive arm. (see chart 1)

The Housing Department is divided into four main branches ---Administration and Planning, Construction, Estate management, Operations.

For convenient management, the estates are divided into two divisions according to their geographical locations---East and West. The Tai Hang Tung Estate, Nam Shan Estate and nine other estates are grouped under the area of Kowloon West ³. There are five to six senior housing managers in each division. Each of them is responsible for a certain number of estates. Each estate office is headed by a housing manger who generally has a staff of two assistant housing managers, eight housing assistants and twelve caretakers. (see chart 2). It is responsible for the day-to-day management and maintenance and maintenance of its estate.

City District Office

Learning from the experience of the riots in 1966 and 1967, the Government realized that there was a communication vacuum between the Government and the public. In order to bridge the gap, a new City District Office Scheme was introduced on 24th January 1968. The Colony was divided into 10 urban districts under the direction of the City District Commissioner's Office, which was then directly responsible to the Deputy Director who,

in turn, was responsible to the Director of the Home Affairs Department. One year later, a tenth City District Office was appointed.⁴ (see chart 3)

The City District Officer would not be directly involved in the administration of other departments, but he would take the role as a coordinator. If there was any disharmony, the City District Officer would give advice to the Government for adjustment.

Ten guiding principles were set for the City District Scheme: (1) to give impetus to the internal reformation of the Government, (2) to mobilize local resources to improve welfare in the community, (3) to guide and help the citizens, (4) to gather public opinion for reviewing the government policy, (5) to collect data about the local community, (6) to cooperate with Umelco, (7) to cooperate with the Urban Councillors, (8) to report public opinion to the Government and coordinate the relief work when there were disasters, (9) to promote the City District Offices in Resettlement Estates, (10) to arouse the social consciousness of the public.⁵

In order to carry out these ten principles, three administrative levels of City District Office Scheme shouldered different functions. The Home Affairs Department Headquarters has three main functions: (a) overall co-ordination, guidance,

direction and management of all field activities and services executed at the City District level, (b) management and execution of certain centralized services and functions and (c) overall direction of the Department.

The City District Commissioners' functions are: (a) to assist City District Officers to observe the agreed objectives of the department and implement the related district programmes, (b) to assess the effectiveness of the District Offices in carrying out these objectives and programmes, (c) to assist and advise City District Officers in obtaining training and deploying staff and other resources to meet the objectives and (d) to take a regional view of the demand and supply of Government services and take action aimed at ensuring that the services are both sufficient and conveniently located for the public.⁶

As the field office of the City District Commissioner's offices, the City District Offices (hereafter as CDO) with the assistance of the sub-offices should fulfil these functions. Understanding public opinion has been the most important function of the CDO. Information is usually gathered by the liaison officers and community organizers through out-reaching person-to-person contact⁷.

Besides understanding public opinion, the CDO tries to predict public response to proposed government policies and activities and to help to promote better understanding, particularly when government activities are causing dis-

satisfaction. Defined by its stated function, the CDO acts as the ears and eyes of the Government. It is assumed be heavily involved in community activities and should be an effective channel to pass public opinion to the Government.

According to the City District Division, Tai Hang Tung fell into the City District of Sham Shui Po, and was under the guidance of the City District Commissioner, Kowloon.

The CDO, Sham Shui Po has four sub-offices. They are at Sham Shui Po, Cheung Sha Wan, Mei Foo and Nam Shan. The Sham Shui Po District is divided into eight sub-divisions: Sham Shui Po Area, Sham Shui Po Pier Area, Cheung Sha Wan Area, So Uk and Lei Cheng Uk Area, Lai Chi Kok Area, Lai Chi Kok Bay Area, Nam Shan and Yau^{Yat} Tsuen Area, and the Shek Kip Mei and Pak Tin Area. (see chart 4) These eight areas come within the jurisdiction of the said four sub-offices. Each sub-office supervises two areas by means of Area Committees. The Nam Shan Sub-office managed the Nam Shan and Yau Yat Tsuen Area, which includes the Tai Hang Tung, Tai Hang Sai, Nam Shan Estates, the Kowloon Tsai Squatter Areas and Yau Yat Tsuen.

The 21 Nam Shan and Yau Yat Tsuen Area Committee members are appointed by the Government annually. The Committee includes 10 laymen, teachers, social

- - -

workers and the chairmen of some building-based organizations such as MACs and Owners Corporations. The criteria of selecting Area Committeemembers are that (1) they are willing to serve the community and (2) they are free to attend meetings. Among the members, none are from the Tai Hang Tung and Nam Shan People's Committee (hereafter as THTPC). It has been explained that due to the lack of formal organizational structure in the THTPC, the authority could not contact its chairman or vice-chairman.

As a non-executive body, the CDO can just make suggestions but it cannot ensure that the Government will follow. Before the redevelopment scheme of Tai Hang Tung started, the Housing Department sent a copy of the conversion plan to the CDO. Having gathered the public opinion through Area Committee meetings, MAC meetings, social gatherings of the community and some individual complaints, the CDO transferred those opinions to the Housing Department for their reference. However, no adjustment has ever been made.

Footnotes (Chapter II Local Administration)

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District Officer Scheme, H.K.: Government, p.2.
- (5) Home Affairs Department, Annual Report, 1979, p.16.
- (6) Ibid.
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The Organization Chart of the Housing Authority.

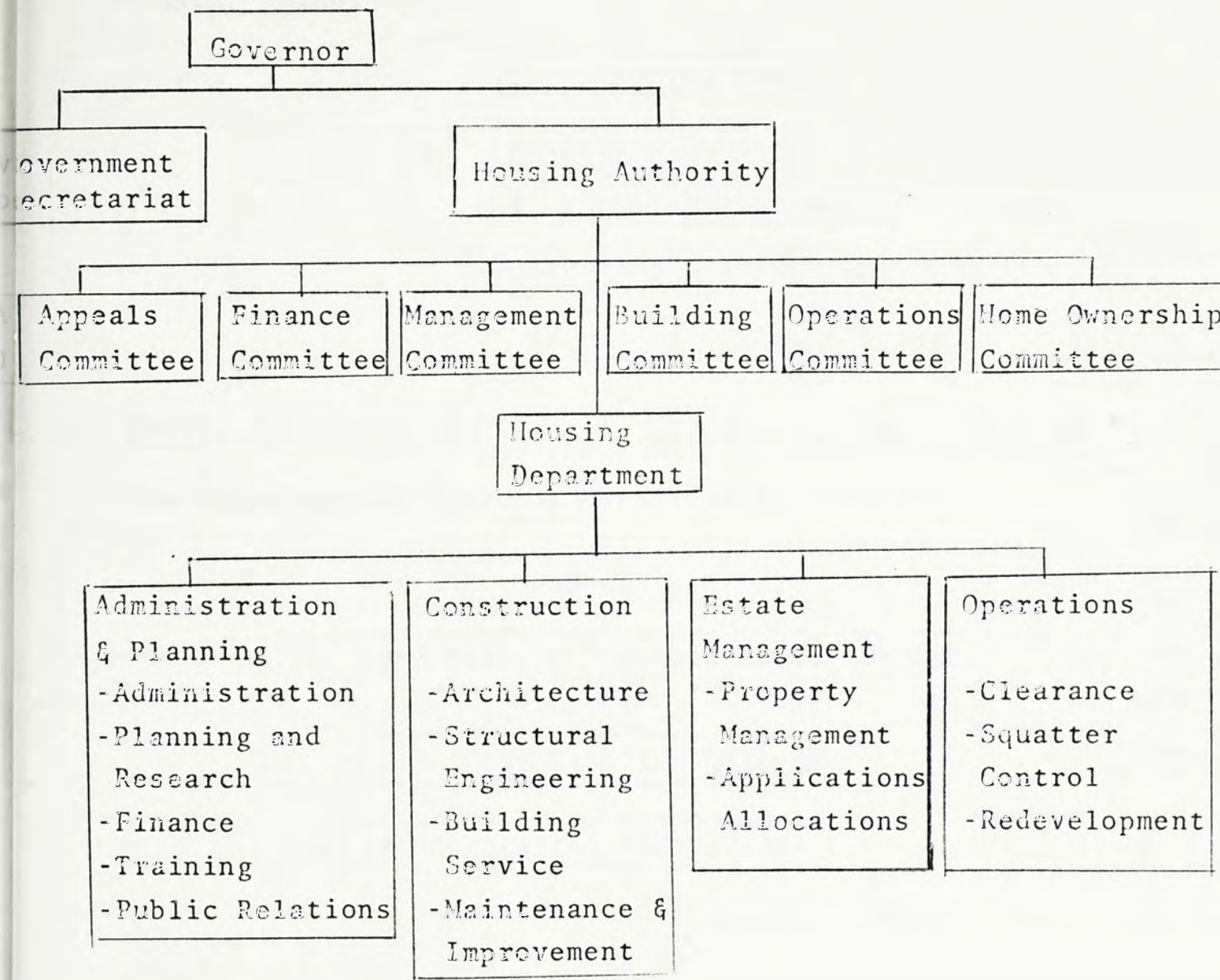


Chart 2.

The Organization Chart of the Estate office of the Housing Authority.

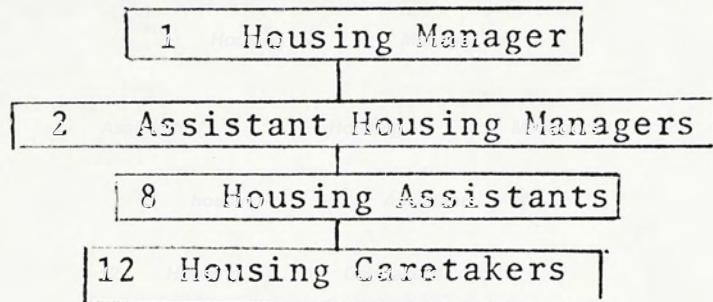


Chart 3.

The Organization Chart of Home Affairs Department.

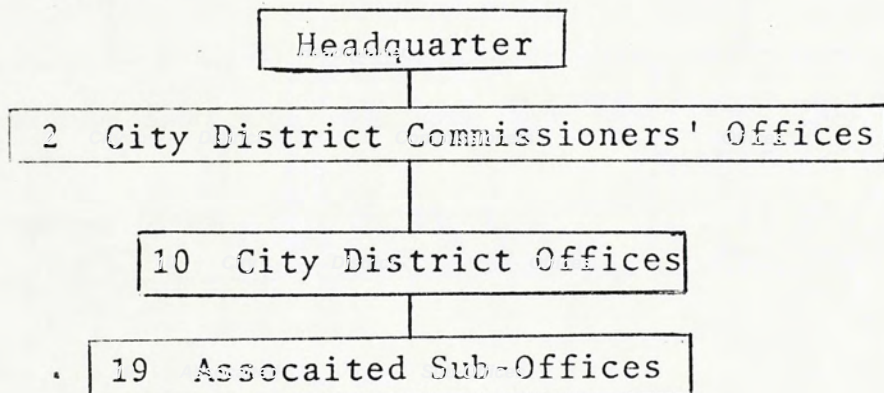
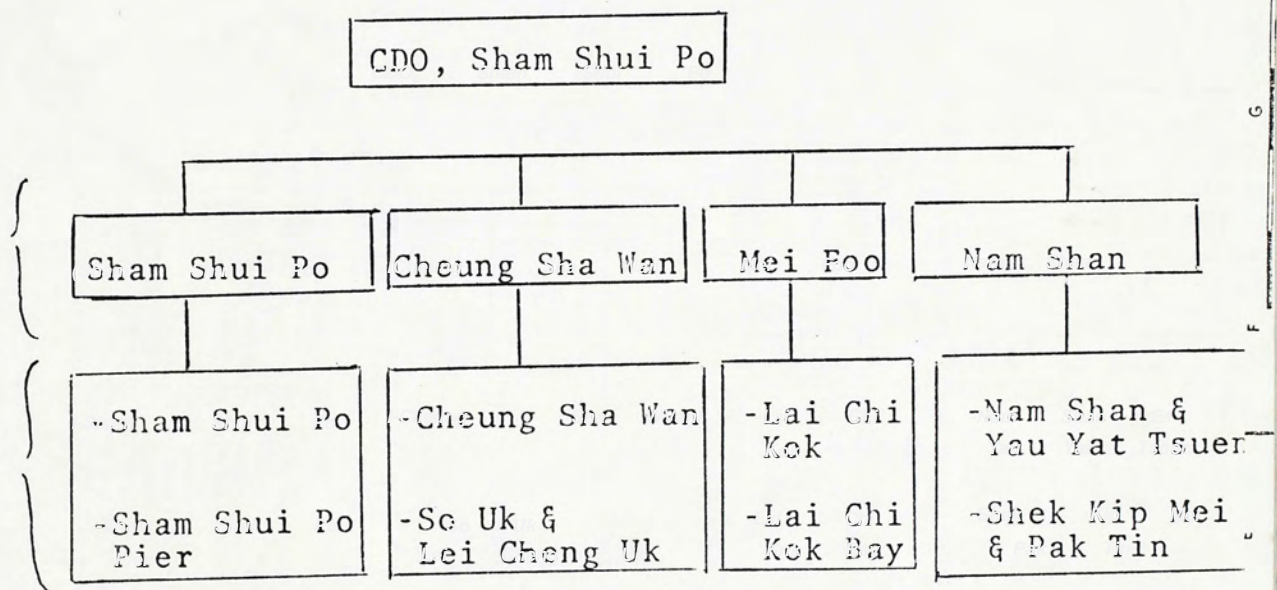
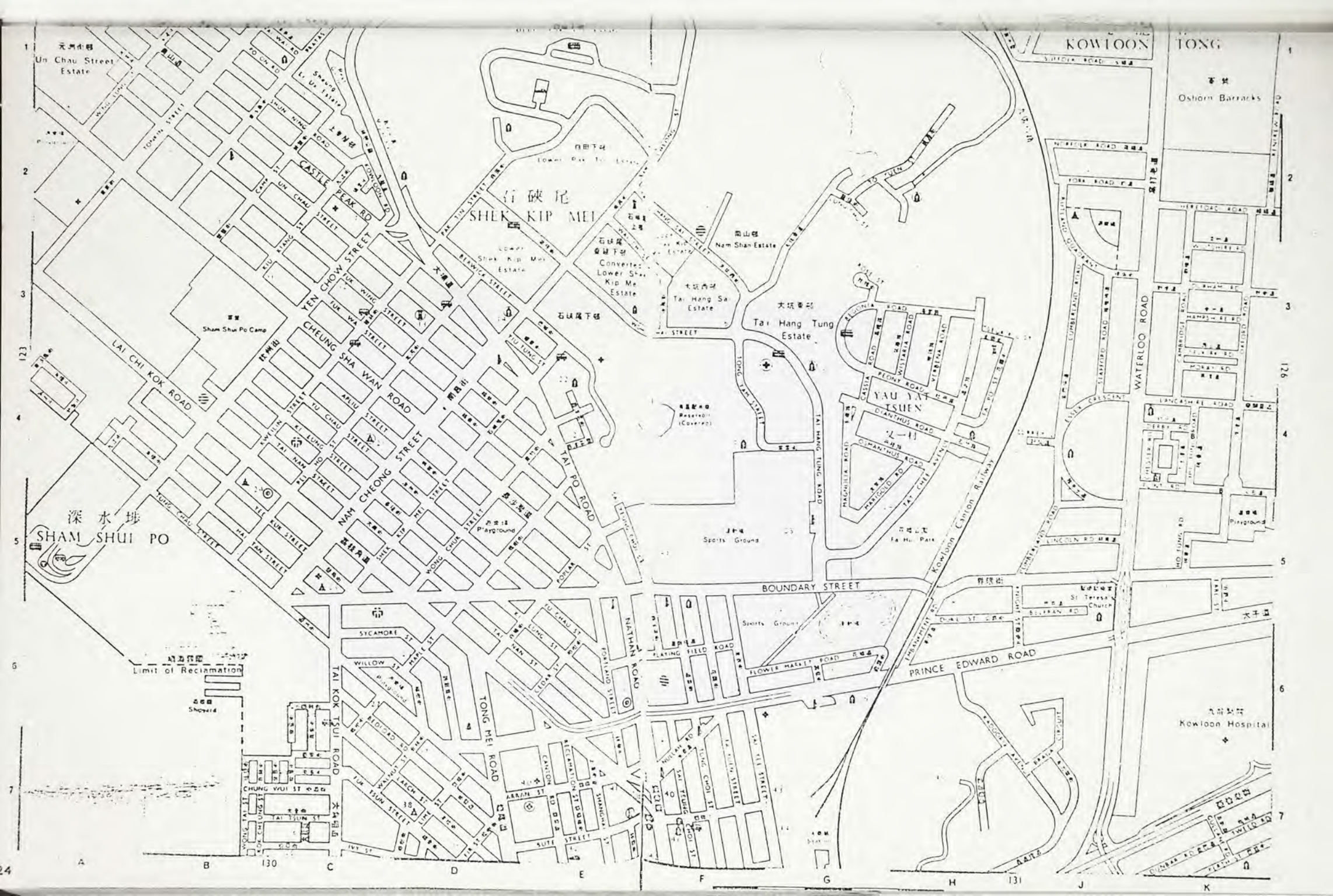


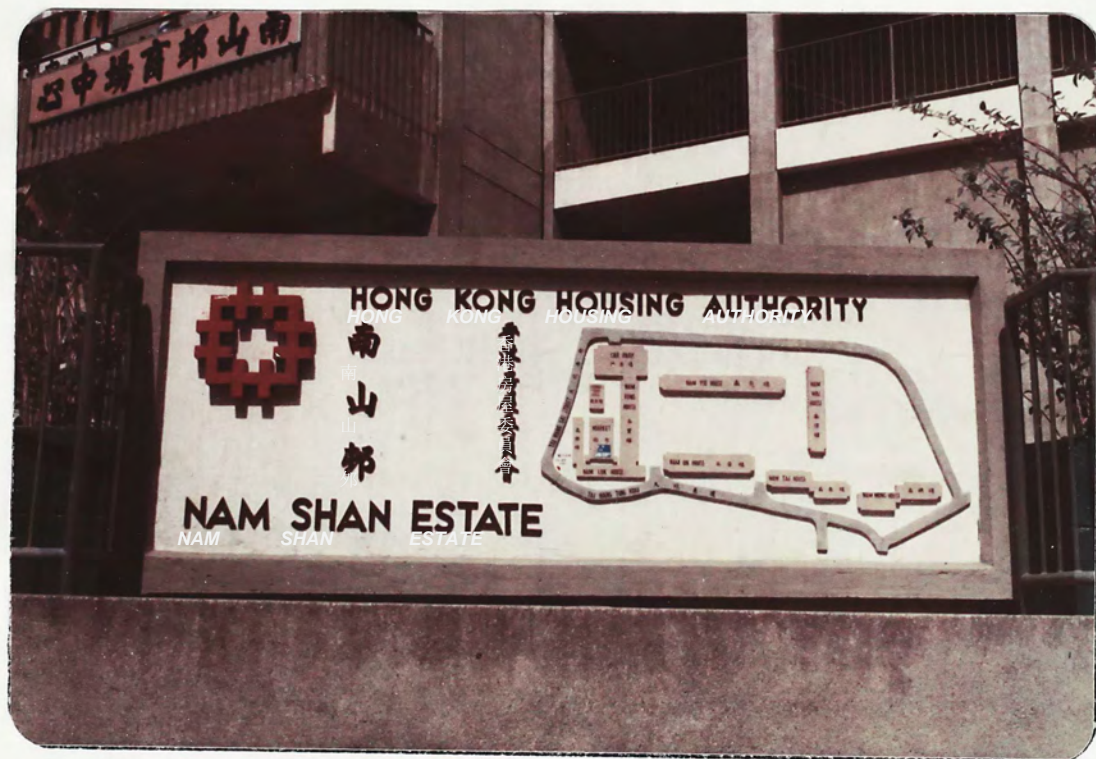
Chart 4.

The City District Office, Sham Shui Po and Its Eight Sub-Divisions.









南山邨商場中心



HONG KONG HOUSING AUTHORITY

南山邨

香港房屋委員會



NAM SHAN ESTATE

NAM SHAN ESTATE

CHAPTER III THE COMMUNITY : SOME BASIC CHARACTERISTICS

Geographical Location

Tai Hang Tung Estates is located in Kowloon Tsai, a district on the west of the Kowloon Peninsula. Kowloon Tsai is a district embracing the inhabited area from the Railway to the east boundary of Sham Shui Po. Its name originates from an old village in this locality.

Kowloon Tsai is surrounded by hills in its east, west and north. East of the Kowloon Tsai is the high-class residential district of Yau Yat Tsuen which is arrayed on a hillock. On the west and central parts of Kowloon Tsai are two public housing estates, namely Tai Hang Sai Estate and Tai Hang Tung Estate. In between these two estates, there used to be a 'Tai Hang' - the word indicates a large nullah. In the 60's, the nullah was filled up and became the Tai Hung Tung Road. Nam Shan Estate is situated north of the Tai Hang Sai Estate. It is the former site of the Tai Hang Sai Cottage Area. North of the Tai Hang Tung Estate is a squatter area named Chu Ku Tsai Squatter Area where no electricity is provided. Further north of it, there is a semi-developed squatter area called Siu Sai Wu along the slope of Beacon Hill. The only private building in Kowloon Tsai is situated south of the Tai Hang Sai Estate. There is a

large sports ground at the southern end of Kowloon Tsai.

Hence, we can see that the Kowloon Tsai community has a rather clear-cut geographical boundary.

Physical Environment

i) Tai Hang Tung Estate

Tai Hang Tung Estate was built during 1954-1955. There were fourteen "H" shaped Mark I blocks with communal washrooms in the cross piece. Residents were mainly the victims of fires and the demolition of old tenements. The Tai Hang Tung Road cut across the estate so that Blocks 1 to 6 lie south, and Blocks 7 to 14 lie north of the road. Blocks 7 to 14 were built a bit earlier than the others. The living space was 24 sq. ft. per adult and 12 sq. ft. per child. That was already below the minimum standard of 35 sq. ft. per person laid down in the Building Ordinance. As the children grew up and new babies were born, the living units became crowded. According to the census in 1971, only 37.32% of the households have 24-35 sq. ft. per person, and 40.01% have less than 24 sq. ft. per person.

In order to mitigate the crowding problem, the Government encouraged some of the households to

move to other estates in the Colony. However, few households were willing to do so. As a result, the Government had to issue a redevelopment plan to rebuild the Estate to solve the problem of crowding and deterioration. The Tai Hang Tung Redevelopment Scheme has been being carried out in several phases since 1977. Those crowded families with less than 24 sq. ft. per person were to be rehoused in other new estates in the Colony. Blocks 1, 2 and 14 were thus selected as phase I. Blocks 1 and 2 have already been converted to four "I" shaped blocks with self-contained units. Each standard room now measures 120 sq. ft. including a kitchen with a sink, a cooking bench and a water closet near the door. (see Figure 1) On the other hand, Block 14 has already been converted to larger units of 295 sq. ft. each. In each unit there is a kitchen with a sink and a cooking bench. (see Figure 2) The communal washrooms in the cross piece are divided among the residents with two units sharing one washroom. Before the phase I conversion started, residents of Block 1, 2 and 14 were offered to move either to the Nam Tai House, the Nam Ming House, the vacant flats in the Tai Hang Tung Estate, the Shek Kip Mei Lower Estate, or the vacant flats of other estates. The Nam Tai House and Nam Ming House provided units of

about 284 sq. ft. for 5 to 6 persons. If they liked, they could even move back to the flats in Blocks 1, 2 and 14 after the conversion had completed. The Housing Authority also offered a "Rehousing Allowance" to the affected families of which the average individual income and saving deposit was less than 200 and 2,000 respectively.

In October 1980, 47.59% of the households lived in flats of more than 35 sq. ft. per person, 21.16% of the households were of 24-35 sq. ft. per person and only 31.25% of the households were of less than 24 sq. ft. per person. Although the households in the Estate are still below the present standard living space (see Table 1), some of their room facilities have been much improved. The Phase I conversion has slightly eased the crowding problem in the Estate.

At present, residents of Blocks 7, 8 and 9 are gradually moving to Nam Wai House and Nam Yiu House. Once the removal is finished, these three blocks will be demolished and three new 12-storey blocks with self-contained units (see Figure 3) will be erected on the site.

The remaining blocks will be demolished by stages after the new Blocks 7, 8, 9 have been built to accommodate

their residents. After the completion of the whole redevelopment scheme the crowding problem in the Tai Hang Tung Estate will be solved and the living facilities will also be improved.

ii) Tai Hang Sai Estate

Tai Hang Sai Estate was built by the Hong Kong Settlers Housing Corporation, Ltd. during 1964-1966. Its site had previously been part of the Tai Hang Sai Cottage Resettlement Area. The Estate includes seven buildings, namely Man Hing House, Man Keung House, Man Hong House, Man Lei House, Man Lok House, Man On House and Man Shun House. There is a commercial arcade in Man Hing House where you can find banks, restaurants, a small department store and stores selling stationary and medicine. The Estate has different sizes of residential units for different family sizes, varying from ten person to four persons. At the beginning, each resident occupied approximately 34 to 36 sq. ft., excluding the kitchen and water closet which were self-contained. Prior to the establishment of Nam Shan Estate, it was the best equipped public housing estate in the Kowloon Tsai community.

iii) Nam Shan Estate

The Nam Shan Estate was built in 1977. The construction of the estate is still proceeding on the

north side. Seven blocks, a multi-storey car-park and a commercial complex have been finished and are being occupied. These blocks are: Nam Fung House, Nam Lok House, Nam On House, Nam Ming House, Nam Tai House, Nam Wai House, and Nam Yiu House. The site of the Nam Shan Estate is formerly the Tai Hang Sai Cottage Area. The name stemmed from an old village in the locality. 'Nam Shan' symbolized longevity.

Various types of design have been employed phases of Nam Shan, all of which are self-contained. The Nam Fung House, Nam Lok House and Nam On House are Phase 1 blocks for overcrowded families in Tai Hang Tung Estate. These 12-storey blocks consist of units sized from 356 sq. ft. to 392 sq. ft. for 7 to 9 persons. The ground floor of the commercial complex is a market of 200 stalls. The second floor is a shopping centre comprising 8 food-cooking shops and 90 shops of other industries. Some shopowners in the Nam Shan Market were previously tradesmen in Blocks 1 and 2 of the Tai Hang Tung Estate. The car-park provides 500 places for the residents of the Tai Hang Tung and the Nam Shan Estates.

Population

i) Age Distribution

The 1971 Census showed that there are in total

28, 122 residents in the Tai Hang Tung Estate. 58.83% of them were under 24 years old, 20.14% were between 40-54 years old (See Table 2). In March 1980, the population in the Estate had increased to 15,658¹, but no statistical breakdown of this population is available. In 1981 Blocks 7, 8 and 9 are scheduled to be redeveloped, therefore the Housing Authority can only estimate that there are about 3,864 persons from 814 households in these three blocks (See Table 3). No investigation of the population has been made in the other blocks.

According to the data shown in Table 3, the percentage age distributions of the three blocks are quite similar to one another in all age groups. As to the comparisons of occupation, income and rentability (See Tables 5 and 6), there is also no significant discrepancy among these three blocks. Tenants of the Estate came originally from squatter areas and were allocated to the fourteen blocks randomly by the Resettlement Department. Therefore, it is logical to assume no significant difference among all the blocks of the Estate. Blocks 7, 8 and 9 can thus be taken as sample blocks and the average of these three blocks may be assumed to represent those of the whole estate.

Futhermore, the Housing Authority has admitted

that the turnover rate of the residents in the resettlement estate is very low in general, except for a few fluctuations due to the birthrate and mortality rate. Hence we may predict the age distribution of the Estate in 1981 from the 1971 Census data. Of course, the percentage of each age cohort should be shifted two rows downwards (See Table 4). Comparing this prediction with the average age distribution of Blocks 7, 8 and 9 in 1981, we can see that the percentages of all age groups are roughly the same. This further strengthens the plausibility of taking the average age distribution of Blocks 7, 8 and 9 as that of the Tai Hang Tung Estate.

It should then be noted that all the data concerning the age distribution, occupation, income and rentability of the population of the Estate mentioned from now on are actually deduced from the average of these three blocks.

ii) Occupation, Income and Rentability

As to their occupation, 30.93% of the population of the Estate were skilled and non-skilled workers of various industries, such as construction, restaurant, manufacture, metal, garment, apprentice, casual workers and coolies. 26.94% were students and 15.79% were housewives and retired people. Only 7.34% were clerical workers

and service sector workers such as brokers and sales representatives (See Table 5).

A survey, consisting of 1,139 samples of the Estate and done by the Housing Authority in December 1976, revealed that the median monthly income of the residents was \$1,612 per household². This median income was higher than the mean income of the populations in Hong Kong³ which was \$1,425. On that time, it was also near to the upper limit of the median income range, of the population in Hong Kong which was \$800-\$2,000⁴. Data from Block 7, 8 and 9 showed that the mean monthly income in 1980 was \$2,973.42 per household and the mean rentability was \$290.76 (See Table 6), which was about 10 dollars more than the rent (\$280) of a 7-person room in Nam Shan Estate.

iii) Educational Attainment

The 1971 Census indicated that the majority of the residents of Tai Hang Tung Estate had finished primary education. In comparison with the situation in 1961, the proportion of secondary-educated residents had increased from 10.8% to 12.75 %, while the university-educated ones had dropped from 0.65% to 0.25% (See Table 7). That might have been attributable to two factors. Firstly, the university graduates in 1961 were from the universities

in Mainland China. Most of them were older people and some might have died before 1971. Secondly, the university graduates of local universities could afford to move out of the Estate to better residence.

Local Organizations

i) Salvation Army Tai Hang Tung Branch

A 3-storey building located at the far north of the Tai Hang Tung Estate was the Salvation Army Tai Hang Tung Branch Centre. Before the Branch Centre opened in April 1959, the Salvation Army had already started its work in Blocks 1 and 2 in 1956. To convey the idea of Christianity to the people has no doubt been one of their chief programmes. Branch worship is held in the evenings and on Sundays on the ground floor of the Centre. There is a clinic on the first floor of the building. The minimum number of patients receiving treatment is about 1,000 per month. There is a nursery and a library on the second floor. The average daily attendance at the children's library which contains 8,000 volumes, is about 250. On the rooftop, there is a playground.

The Salvation Army is concerned with other activities and welfare of the Kowloon Tsai community, too. It organizes several recreational groups, for

example, piano-playing, counselling and dress-making groups. It also organized a carnival, which was called "Enjoy yourself at Nam Shan" and was sponsored by the CDO (Sham Shui Po), for the residents of the community in the fall of 1978. Most of the subgroups of the local organizations were invited to present programmes in the carnival. Besides recreational activities, the Branch has also been running the Nam Shan Hostel for the Elderly which is on the second and third floors of Nam Ming House, since June 1979. 40 places in the Hostel are reserved for the elder of the community.

ii) Nam Shan Kaifong Association

The Nam Shan Kaifong Association was formerly named the Tai Hang Sai Kaifong Association. The Tai Hang Sai Kaifong Association was established and registered as a Society in 1958. It was reorganized as the "Tai Hang Sai Kaifong Association Company Limited" in 1969. In its golden age, the Association has over 10,000 members. It then decreased to 3,000 in 1971, and reported some 1,500 in 1980. Today about half of the members are former residents of the Tai Hang Tung/Sai Estates and the Kowloon Tsai Squatter Areas who have now moved to other communities in the Colony.

Education, relief and welfare have always been the

major concerns of the Association. In 1960, the Association founded a primary school of 300 places on the rooftop of Block 10 of Tai Hang Tung Estate. When the Government provided free primary education, the school was discontinued in August 1975. A clinic is operated by the Association too. Several Chinese traditional practitioners are employed to serve the members of the Association.

The Welfare Fund Committee was a subgroup of the Association, though it was financially independent of it. When any member died, the Committee would collect 50 cents from each of the members in order to grant the bereaved family \$1,000 (帛金).

In the late 1960s, the Association ran a noodle factory jointly with other twelve kaifong associations. Flour from American charities was processed into noodles for distribution to its members. Owing to insufficient space, the restaurants in Tai Hang Sai were first permitted to have tables outside their doors. This actually resulted from a negotiation by the Association with the Government. Upon the Association's request, two more public taps were installed for the cottage residents. The Association was managed under the guidance of an Executive Committee (See Chart 5 and 6).

All executive members were tradesmen, and were elected every two years. There were twelve sections headed by twelve secretaries to deal with the various activities.

When the first two blocks of the Nam Shan Estate was completed in 1977, the Tai Hang Sai Kaifong Association, which was originally located at the edge of Tai Hang Sai Cottage Area, moved into Nam On House and changed its title to "Nam Shan Kaifong Association Company Limited".

In concert with the activities launched by the Government, the Nam Shan Kaifong Association has held numerous summer programmes for adolescents. It joined with the CDO (Sham Shui Po) and many other local organizations in Sham Shui Po District in organizing the "Sham Shui Po Fortnight" in November 1979. The "Sham Shui Po Fortnight" consisted of a series of programmes lasting for 16 days. It aimed at encouraging all age groups of all strata to organize and participate in activities, which would contribute to the community and enhance mutual understanding and the unity of the residents. The available services of the Government and voluntary agencies were introduced to the residents through various entertainments such as variety shows, bandwagon shows, puppet shows, pop concerts, and so on.

iii) St. Peter's Catholic Church

The Maryknoll Fathers have erected a church in the Tai Hang Sai Squatter Area. Apart from preaching, they undertook many welfare activities: (1) for example, they ran a clinic providing medical treatment to the Kowloon Tsai residents; (2) ran a Noodle Unit producing about 3,500 lbs. of noodles per day to serve some of the families in the Tai Hang Tung Estate; (3) ran a free meal kitchen preparing some 300 free meals every day for the pupils of the rooftop schools; (4) occasionally distributed clothing and surplus food to needy people; (5) ran a social centre where a Maryknoll sister offered family counselling and help to the residents and (6) organized group activities for the Catholic children, youth and adults.

In 1972, the ground floor of the Church was lent to the Community Organization for an office. Finally, the Church was demolished in connection with the urban renewal plan in 1974.

iv) Kowloon Tsai Credit Union

On the second floor of Block 3 of the Tai Hang Tung Estate, there is a Kowloon Tsai Credit Union which was founded by the St. Peter's Catholic Church for the catholics of Kowloon Tsai. Later, it was granted permission by the Government to recruit residents of Kowloon Tsai as its members.

In 1975, it comprised 260 members and had a deposit account amounting to \$70,000,00. Members could borrow money at a very low interest rate for paying medical fees and debts, purchasing cars, colour television, refrigerators, furniture, and working capital. Since the Union was established in 1968, it has lent \$300,000 to its members.

In addition to the loan service, it provides other types of service for its members: (1) to cover life insurance of \$12,000 for members, (2) to cover the loan safety insurance for members, (3) to help members in preparing their family budgets, (4) to organize recreational activities, and (5) to publish a monthly Consumers' Guide.

v) Kowloon Tsai Kaifong Association

The Kowloon Tsai Kaifong Association was formerly the Tai Hang Tung Kaifong Association.

After of the riots in 1967, the Government found that there were only nine Kaifong associations in the resettlement estates where as many as 361,000 people were housed. ^{The} Liaison Branch of the Resettlement Department was instructed to organize kaifong associations in the resettlement estates to play a role as a bridge to guarantee two-way communication between the Government and the people, and to unite residents to work for the local well-being of the community. It was so that the Tai Hang Tung Kaifong Association was founded in 1968. (see chart 7 and 8).

In 1974, the Tai Hang Tung Redevelopment Scheme was issued. The Association then changed its name as the "Kowloon Tsai Kaifong Association" to adapt itself for community change. It wanted to enlarge its geographical scope and recruitment to the whole community of Kowloon Tsai. At its heyday, the Association had more than 600 members. Now, the membership has dropped to some 300, most of whom are elderly, this is due to the Redevelopment Scheme and the death of old members.

In the past, the Kowloon Tsai Kaifong Association used to organize many recreational groups for the residents, such as traditional music, western music, kung fu, and dressmaking classes. The Association was also involved in relief activities. It helped victims of fires, floods and typhoons. The most important activity was the Pak Kam Group (帛金會). When any member died, the Group would collect one dollar from each of its members in order to give to the bereaved family. Now, the Association holds just a few activities : the Pak Kam Group and a yearly reception for the elderly.

vi) Tai Hang Tung and Nam Shan People's Committee (THTPC)

The Tai Hang Tung and Nam Shan People's Committee is a local organization initiated by a social work agency, the Society for Community Organization, aiming at actualizing people's potential. It always uses conflict strategy to press the Government in order to fight for their demands. Since

the People's Committee is registered as a limited company, it is neither under the supervision of the CDO nor under the monitorship of the Police Force. Details of its history and organizational structure will be presented in the next chapter.

vii) Mutual Aid Committees

A Mutual Aid Committee (hereafter as M.A.C.) is a committee formed by the residents of an estate block, organized and supervised by the CDO. Each MAC consists of three staff members - the chairman, the secretary and the treasurer. They are elected by the floor representatives, who, in turn are elected by the floor residents.

Seven Tai Hang Sai Estate MACs were set up in 1973. They had no office until September 1978, when with the assistance of the CDO (Sham Shui Po) they were granted three offices in Man Hing House, Man Keung House and Man Hong House.

The Nam Shan Estate MACs have each got an office either in a flat or in a corner of a staircase on the ground floor. The CDO subsidizes each MAC with \$100 per month for stationary and miscellaneous expenditures. If the MACs hold any special activities, they can also apply for special allowances.

The Tai Hang Tung Estate has no MACs. It is one of the two estates without MACs in the district. Since the Estate is now still under redevelopment, it would be a waste for the CDO to form MACs in the Estate because they would be totally disorganized with a few years.

Figure 1.

Plan of a converted room in Blocks 1 and 2 of the Tai Hang Tung Estate.

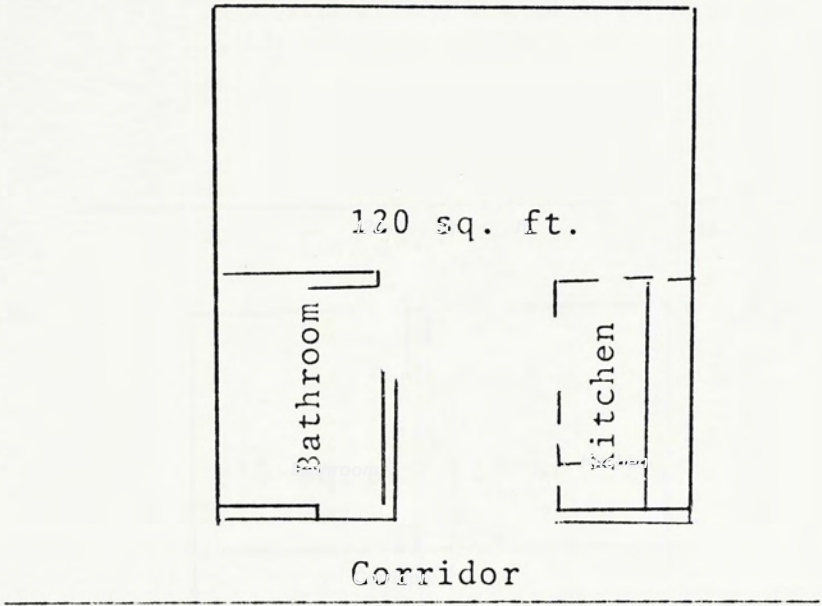


Figure 2.

Plan of room in converted Block 14 of the Tai Hang Tung Estate.

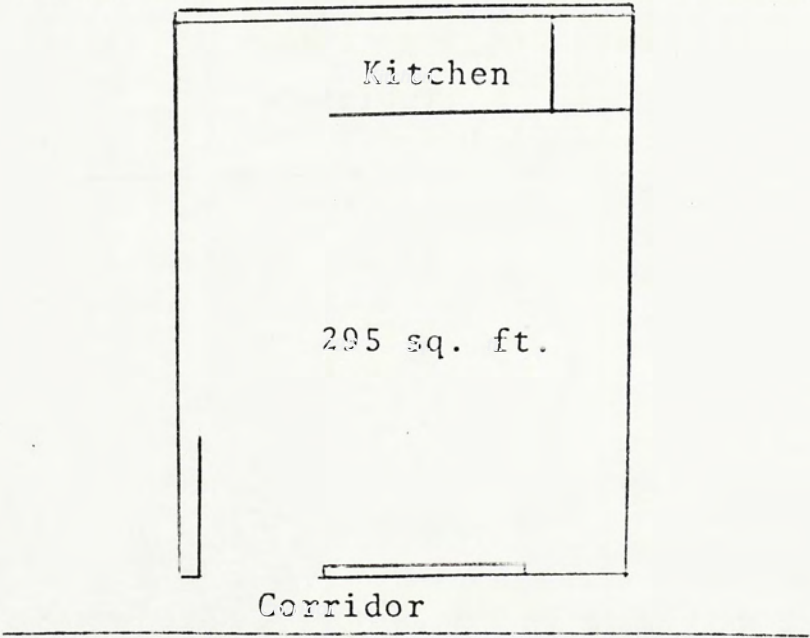


Figure 3.

Plan of rooms Blocks 3 to 13 of the Tai Hang Tung Estate.

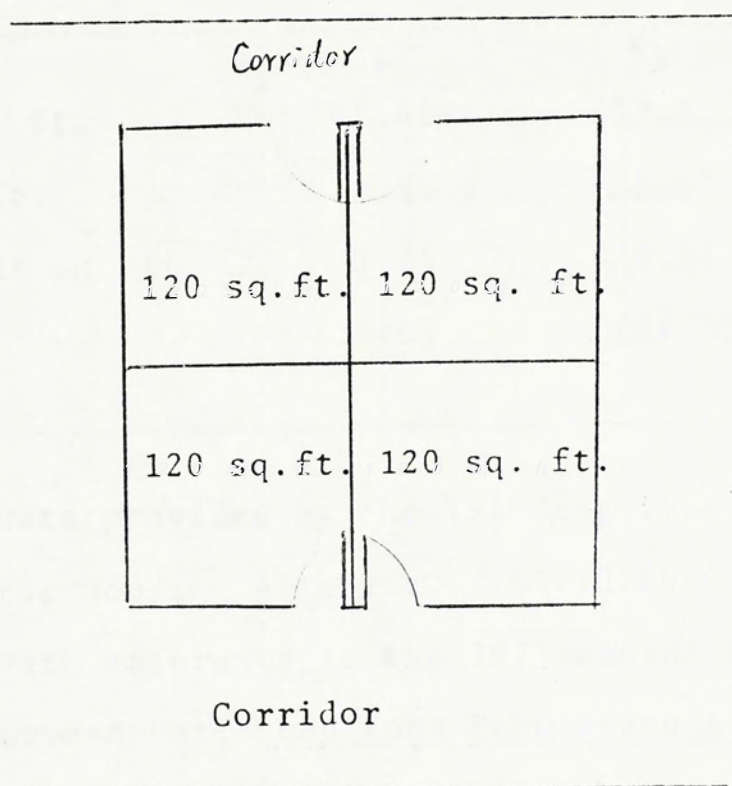


Table 1. Distribution of Household Living Density in the
Tai Hang Tung Estate.

Living Space/Person	Years	
	1980 ¹	1971 ²
	%	%
Over 35 sq. ft.	47.45	37.32
24-35 sq. ft.	21.16	22.67
Less than 24 sq. ft.	31.25	40.01
Total	(3389)	(5873)

Source: (1) Data provided by the Tai Hang Tung Estate Office,
the Housing Authority. 31.10.1980.

(2) With reference to the 1971 Census (Hong Kong
Government, Hong Kong Population and Housing
Census, 1971: Street Book Tabulation V.3,
New Kowloon and Tsuen Wan,
H.K.: H.K. Government Printer, p.151 and 155)
this density distribution table is worked out
by the author.

Table 2. Age Distribution of the Tai Hang Tung Estate in 1971.

Age Range	Estate in 1971
	%
0- 4	6.49
5- 9	13.37
10-14	17.77
15-19	13.92
20-24	6.94
25-29	2.74
30-34	2.45
35-39	4.29
40-44	6.79
45-49	6.98
50-54	6.37
55-59	4.67
60-64	2.94
65 or above	3.94
Total	(28,122)

Source: Hong Kong Government, Hong Kong Population and Housing Census, 1971: V.3, New Kowloon and Tsuen Wan, H.K.: H.K. Government Printer, p.151 and 155.

Table 3. Age Distribution of Blocks 7, 8, and 9 of the Tai Hang Tung Estate in 1980.

Age Range	Blocks			Total
	7	8	9	
	%	%	%	%
0- 4	3.76	4.71	3.97	4.11
5- 9	3.33	6.09	4.23	4.50
10-14	7.31	7.37	8.09	7.71
15-19	14.73	12.29	14.41	13.92
20-24	16.67	17.09	15.71	16.30
25-29	11.83	10.31	11.74	11.39
30-34	5.05	3.34	5.27	4.71
35-39	2.90	2.36	2.09	2.36
40-44	1.83	3.24	1.72	2.15
45-49	6.13	6.88	4.28	5.41
50-54	7.31	7.76	6.63	7.09
55-59	5.70	6.38	7.04	6.55
60-64	5.17	5.01	5.84	5.46
65 or above	8.28	7.17	8.98	8.33
Total	(930)	(1,018)	(1,916)	(28,122)

Source: With reference to the "Rehousing Application Forms" collected by the Housing Authority, this age distribution table is worked out by the author.

Table 4. Percentage Age Distribution of Tai Hang Tung Estate

Age Range	1971 Census Data	Predicted in 1981	Average % of Blocks 7,8&9.
	%	%	%
0- 4	6.49		4.11
5- 9	13.37		4.50
10-14	17.77	6.49	7.71
15-19	13.92	13.37	13.92
20-24	6.94	17.77	16.30
25-29	2.74	13.92	11.39
30-34	2.45	6.94	4.71
35-39	4.29	2.74	2.36
40-44	6.79	2.45	2.15
45-49	6.98	4.29	5.41
50-54	6.37	6.79	7.09
55-59	4.67	6.98	6.55
60-64	2.94	6.37	5.46
65 or above	3.94	4.67	8.33
Total	(28,122)		(28,122)

Table 5. Occupation Distribution of Tai Hang Tung Resettlement Estate.

	Block			Average of Blocks 7, 8 & 9
	7	8	9	
	%	%	%	%
Retired +				
Housewives	15.48	15.03	16.34	15.79
Students	25.16	27.67	27.40	26.94
Skilled+non-				
skilled	34.20	33.21	28.13	30.93
Clerk+				
Services	8.17	8.35	7.20	7.34
Self-				
employed	3.01	5.99	3.97	4.27
Others	13.98	9.73	16.96	14.34
Total	(930)	(1,018)	(1,916)	(3,864)

Skilled + Non-skilled include construction, restaurant, factory, metal, apprentice, skilled, casual, worker, garment, coolie.

Self-employed include hawkers, shop proprietor.

Others include unemployed, handicapped, unclassified.

Source: With reference to the "Rehousing Application Forms" collected by the Housing Authority, this occupation distribution table is worked out by the author.

Table 6. The Mean Income and Rentability of the Tai Hang Tung Estate

	Blocks			Average
	7	8	9	
Rentability	294.93	277.86	299.49	290.76
Income	3,055.53	2,838.05	2,976.68	2,973.42

Source : With reference to the "Rehousing Application Forms" Collected by the Housing Authority, this Income and Rentability table is worked out by the author.

Table 7. Educational Attainment of Residents in Tai Hang Tung Estate

	1961	1971
	%	%
No schooling	25.37	26.57
Private tutor	5.55	4.08
Primary	57.19	55.99
Secondary	10.80	12.57
Post-secondary	0.44	0.54
University	0.65	0.25
	(27,343)	(28,122)

Source : 1961 Census

1971 Census

Chart 5. The organization chart of Nam Shan Kaifong Association.

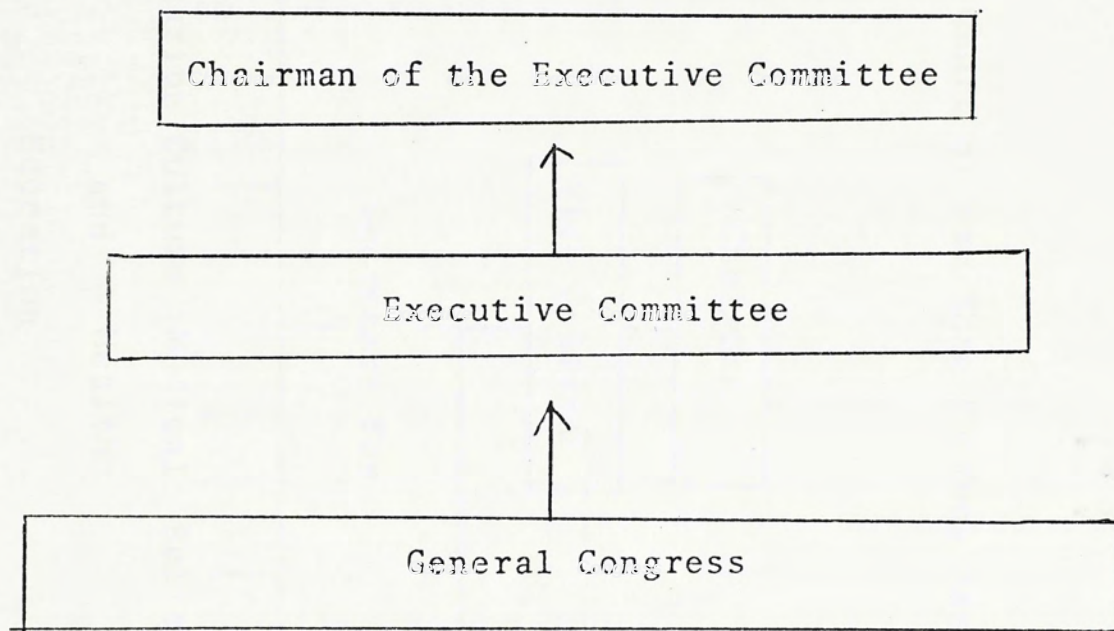


Chart 6.

The Organization Chart of Nam Shan Kaifong Association Executive Committee

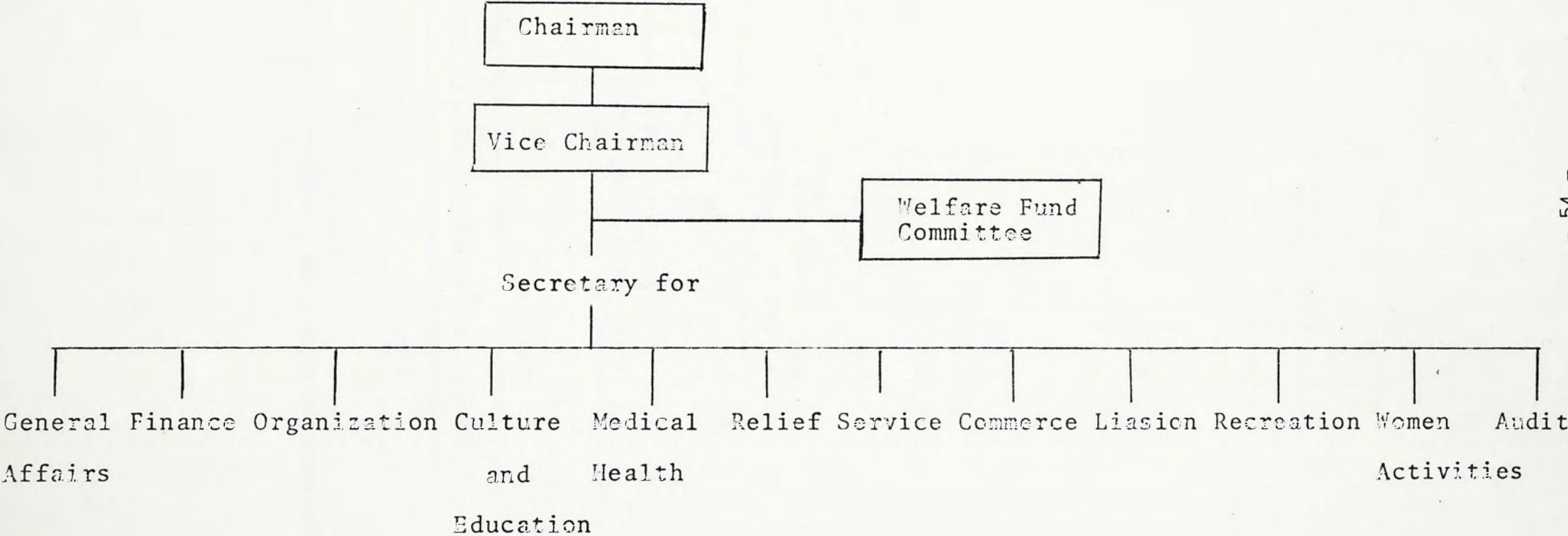


Chart 7. Organization Chart of Kowloon Tsai Kaifong Association.

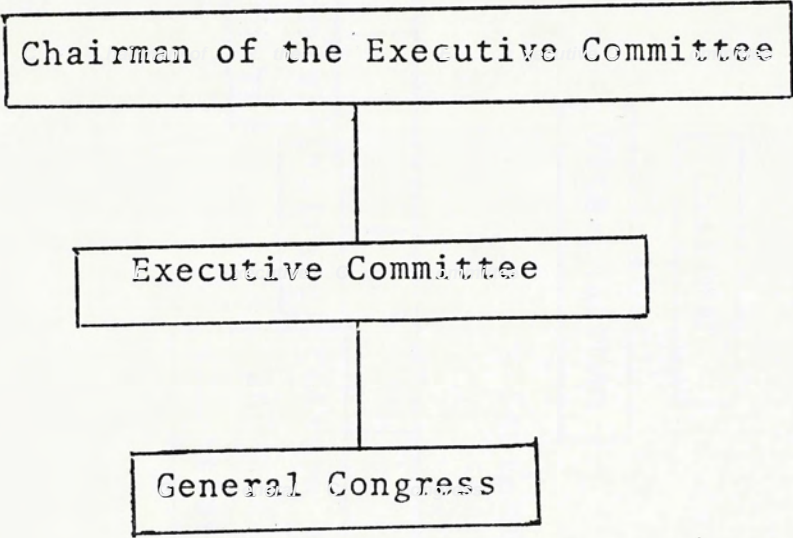
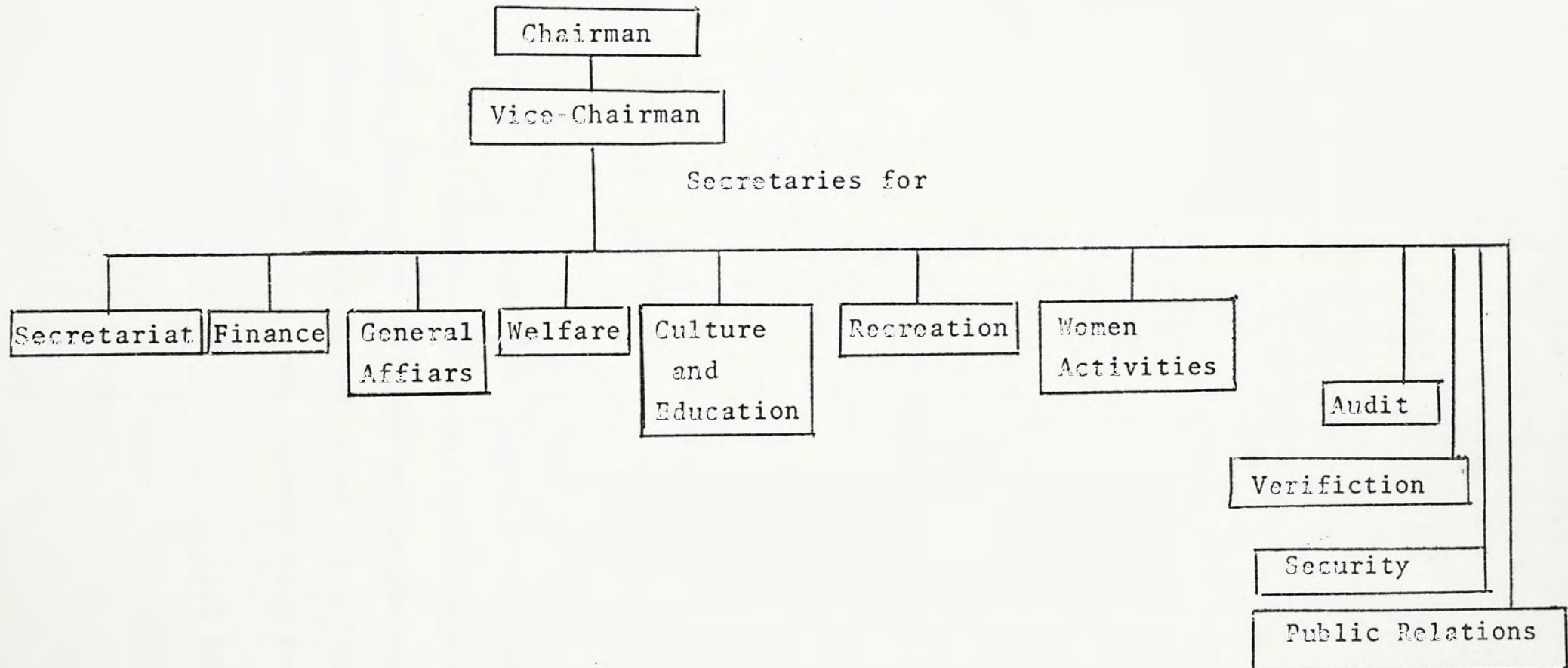


Chart 3. Organization Chart of Kowloon Tsai Kaifong Association

Executive Committee



Footnotes

(CHAPTER III).

1. Hong Kong Housing Authority, Annual Report, 1979-1980, H.K.: Hong Kong Government Printer, p.89.
2. This median was based on the income figures provided by the sample residents themselves.
3. Ming Pao, 8.9.1977.
4. *Ibid.*

CHAPTER IV: THE TAI HANG TUNG AND NAM SHAN PEOPLE'S COMMITTEE

The Society for Community Organization and the Kowloon Tsai Community Organization

The formation of the Society for Community Organization (SoCo) can be traced back to 1970. A small group of people interested in community organization started meeting regularly. It included a Maryknoll father of the Maryknoll Fathers' Labour Advisory Team who had been involved in the Blind Workers' Strike, a Maryknoll sister working in community development for Caritas, the vicar of the Anglican Holy Carpenter Church, the staff of the Hong Kong Christian Industrial Committee, the Deputy Director of Hong Kong Christian Services, and the Director of Yang Memorial Social Service Centre. It was stimulated and encouraged by the decision of the East Asia Christian Conference's Urban Industrial Mission to emphasize its work in community organization. The East Asia Christian Conference, a coordinating and funding body in Asia, had started other community development projects such as at Tondo in Manila and Jurong in Singapore. The Action Committee on People's Organization, a training centre in Asia was the subordinate body of the East Asia Christian Conference¹. It helped the establishment of SoCo.

✓ The visits of Saul Alinsky, one of the most famous community activists in America, and Tom Gaudette helped the group to increase their understanding of community organisation and its applicability in Hong Kong. The group explored successfully the availability of necessary funds and secured the service of a consultant in order to train local staff. In February 1971, the Committee of the SoCO was established. Dan Roche, an American student of Saul Alinsky, came to the organisation as a consultant in September 1971². He left Hong Kong in October 1972 because the Immigration Department did not extend his period of stay in Hong Kong. With Dan Roche's arrival, the SoCO became operative (see Chapter 7). Five trainees were either hired or sponsored by other agencies³.

✓ The SoCO aimed "(1) To develop a sense of community among the people of Hong Kong (2) educate and enable people to accept responsibility for participating in resolving community problems, (3) to sponsor training programmes for local projects in community organisation, (4) to stimulate community organisation in Hong Kong. (5) to maintain contacts with community organisation projects overseas and to relate to regional and international bodies active in this field."⁴

The SoCO has been operating along three major lines. In times of issue-oriented projects, that is, short-term projects dealing with specific problems of social injustice,

the SoCO would organise the people to tackle the problem. There are two levels of organising, the spot-event organising and the colony-wide organising. For grassroots organisation projects, that is, long term projects based on a geographical area, the SoCO would help the people to organise into groups so as to take action independently on community problems. Sometimes, services programmes are used as a means to "conscientize" people. A policy intervention project is generally derived from a grassroots project or an issue-oriented project. It is organised to request the Government for reformation about current policy. When there is a policy intervention project, a research and team work approach would be adopted. Research would be conducted in order to understand the situation of the problem. For instance, a survey of the unemployment situation in Tai Hang Tung and a survey of the complaints and needs of the hawkers were made in 1973 and 1979 respectively. Team work has also been done by the staff for the people, for example, a film show on living conditions in Tai Hang Tung and the publication of 'The Voice of Tai Hang Tung'.

The first project of the SoCO focused on the Yau Ma Tei Typhoon Anchorage where 6,000 boat dwellers organised themselves and obtained resettlement in early 1972. In late 1971, Kowloon Tsai was chosen as the main area of work. The SoCO established the Kowloon Tsai Community Organisation

(hereafter as the KTCO). Since then the SoCO has been working with hawkers, the residents of various resettlement estates and squatters. It extended its work to a number of licenced areas in 1974.

In 1979, the SoCO started work in the hawker area. Its workers helped the hawkers to form self-disciplinary societies for cleaning and leaving passage for traffic. In March, twelve people's committees joined together and registered as an independent society called the People's Council on Public Housing Policy. The issue of rooftop heat and the formation of the People's Council indicate the embryonic stage of the formation of a united front of the residents.

Since its establishment, the SoCO has no intention to become connected with the Government or to be an established funding body in Hong Kong. This is because one of its targets, which is to change the existing power structure, would not be accepted by the Government. The SoCO accepts both organisations and individuals for membership. It is financially supported by donations from churches, funding agencies and individuals. It does not receive any Government subvention.

Organisation and action are the backbone of the programmes of the SoCO. The staff organise people to take action to fight for their own rights. Besides putting

pressure in their opponents, non-violent, embarrassing, annoying and incooperative tactics such as sit-ins, marches and possible threats are taken. The actions create a sense of achievement which maintains motivation and enhances the participation of the groups and individuals. Actions may be viewed as a way to organize people. It is a means to an end, which is to develop power so that the people can handle their problems. Basically, the SoCo directed the Alinsky-type of community development project in Hong Kong. The Alinsky-type community project stressed that once the deprived were organized, they would gain power - so conflict strategies were the prime methods to achieve immediately realizable goals.

In November 1971, St. Peter's Community Catholic Church invited the SoCo to participate in their meetings so as to improve the overall situation of Kowloon Tsai. Representatives from the Salvation Army Tai Hang Tung Branch, Tai Hang Tung Community Centre, Tai Hang Tung Kaifong Association, the Maryknoll Fathers and Sisters, together with some residents of the community attended the meetings, too.

As sanitation, public facilities and security were all deteriorating, attendants at the meetings agreed that it was necessary to improve the living environment of the

community. In mid-January 1972, with the assistance of St. Peter's Church, the SoCO set up the grass root project, that was the KTCO⁵, in the St. Peter's Service Centre, which was on the ground floor of the Church, to serve the residents of Kowloon Tsai. The organisation was established in order to organise people for the development of power, to improve the adverse living conditions, and to deal with the community problems such as poverty and poor academic achievement.

Prior to the decision to choose Kowloon Tsai as its pilot grassroot project, the SoCO had visited several communities in the Colony, such as the Lei Cheng Uk, Shek Kip Mei, Kowloon Tsai, Kwun Tong and Shaukiwan, etc. It chose Kowloon Tsai to start its project because Kowloon Tsai had four important characteristics in comparison with other communities. Firstly, it was a middle-sized community. The total population of Kowloon Tsai was about 40,000. The SoCO could manage it with limited ^{man-}power. Secondly the community was a "representative" one. It included the oldest resettlement estate, a low-cost housing estate, a squatter area, a cottage area, a private building and one of the most prestigious high-class residential areas. In other words, the Kowloon Tsai community comprised nearly all strata in Hong Kong; it was like a miniature of the Colony. Thirdly, there was support from local organisation. St. Peter's

Church supported the idea of the project by subventing part of the budget, and provided its service centre for the SoCO to operate as an office. Finally, the Kowloon Tsai Community had a rather clear-cut boundary. It was surrounded by hills on three sides and separated by a large sportsground from the Mong Kok District; the workers could identify their working area easily.

Three trained Chinese staff of the Organisation employed the grassroot approach to build up relationships and make contact with the residents through direct conversation. Close contact with the residents led the staff and workers to learn their needs and ways of living. The conversations helped the workers to identify the enthusiastic residents and potential leaders from the others.

In March 1972, the KTCO staff took their first step by helping the residents to unite together and approach the Resettlement Department for rapid renovation of the toilets in Block 9. The Department later listened to the plea and finished the repair within two weeks.

(For details of the issue refer to case 1 below p90)

On May 10, 1972, heavy rain brought tons of soil down Parker Hill into the drains of low-lying Kowloon Tsai, and four squatter areas were flooded. The flooding actually stemmed from an earlier excavation work on Parker Hill that

had caused soil erosion, thus ruining and destroying the drainage system within these areas. A KTCO staff worker immediately organised a group of 16 representatives to urge the Public Works Department (PWD) to prevent future flooding. Since the PWD refused to guarantee the safety of the squatters, two mass meetings, and a demonstration at the Resettlement Department followed by a march down Nathan Road were held to put pressure on the Government. At last, 6,000 squatter households were moved to low-cost housing⁶.

The issue of leaking rooftops, which was another chronic problem, consolidated the KTCO's basis. Potential leaders were at work on a series of issues, but they were not well-organised. In order to organise them, there must be some common interests to join them together. The issue of leaking rooftops was selected to serve this goal. Actually, the issue was confined to a small group rather than the estate as a whole since it concerned only the tenants of the top floors. However, it enabled the KTCO staff to lead a small group of residents from various blocks. During the process of the community action, some residents were trained to be leaders. These leaders learned how to organise meetings and plot a course of action.

From all these issues the residents learned that

they could fight reasonably for their won rights. When the Keep Hong Kong Clean Campaign was in full swing in mid-November 1972, the Resettlement Department notified the residents to dismantle the unsightly, drying racks they had constructed along their balconies. However, the "proper" drying racks installed by the Resettlement Department were difficult to reach, and a few residents had been hurt as they could not keep their balance while leaning out of the balcony to reach the racks. More than 30 residents of Block 10 refused to take down their "private" racks and went to argue with the estate office. Their efforts being in vain, they then asked the KTCO for assistance. Two KTCO workers visited the residents to learn about the situation. About 400 residents attended a mass meeting at St. Peter's Church. The next day, 20 representatives of the residents and 3 KTCO workers handed in a letter to the Resettlement Department Headquarters. Ten days later, the residents received a letter from the Department which allowed the tenants to keep their "private" drying racks⁷.

The success in these issues encouraged the indigenous leaders and residents. It was time to set up a long-term organisation in the community. "The People's Committee for Improving the Living Environment of Tai Hang Tung Estate" was thus founded in February 1973 and later became the THTPC.

Though the KTCO claimed to serve the residents of

Tai Hang Tung and Tai Hang Sai, the focus of the KTCO's work was on the Tai Hang Tung State except for a few cases such as rehousing the residents of the flooded squatter areas, working with the Hong Kong Conservation Association and the residents of Yau Yat Tsuen to protest against aeroplane flights at night, and demanding compensation for removal of Kwong Man Village in the Tai Hang Sai Cottage Area⁸. Since 1974, almost no community work has been done outside the Tai Hang Tung Estate. This is because in the SoCO's opinion, the living environment in the Tai Hang Sai Estate was reasonably good, and since the target population of the SoCO is the most deprived groups, (who were those living in the squatters, cottage and the Tai Hang Tung Estate), nothing has been done for the residents of the Tai Hang Sai Estate.

With the implementation of the urban renewal plan in mid 1974, St. Peter's Church and the Tai Hang Sai Cottage Area were demolished. The Salvation Army Tai Hang Tung Branch provided part of the second floor of its Community Centre for the KTCO as their new office. However, the SoCO did not send any worker to the KTCO for more than a year after 1975. The KTCO seemed to be non-existent, and THTPC become directly under the SoCO.

HISTORY

The THTPC originates from the "People's Committee for Improving the Living Environment of the Tang Hang Tung Estate".

On February 17, 1973, about 1,000 people met in the Tai Hang Tung Community Centre. A five-minute documentary colour film produced by the KTCO was shown to reveal the poor living conditions, sanitation problems and deterioration evidence in the old blocks. 30 residents from the 14 blocks joined together to form the "People's Committee for Improving the Living Environment of Tai Hang Tung Estate" to urge the Government to improve their living environment by building new estates similar to those in Pak Tin as soon as possible.

Three resolutions passed at the meeting were handed over to the People's Committee for execution :

- (1) to urge the Government to improve the living environment in the estate, and, in the meantime, to seek understanding from the community at large;
- (2) to urge all relevant government departments to reconstruct the estate quickly;
- (3) to request a meeting with officials of the Housing Department so that local representatives could air their needs and opinions concerning the reconstruction⁹.

In the same year, the SoCO started to publish

a newsletter called "The Voice of Tang Hang Tung" for the residents of Tai Hang Tung. The People's Committee took no part in it before changing to become THTPC in 1976. The newsletter acted as a coordination machine to keep the residents informed of all happenings in Tai Hang Tung. The aims of the newsletter were : (1) to reveal the demands of the residents, to attract the authority's attention and to seek for improvement; (2) to help the residents to have mutual understanding and be united and friendly; (3) to provide a healthy publication for the residents¹⁰. In addition, the SoCO also organized a group of commercial tenants to deal with the current problems and with any further problems which might emerge during the redevelopment period¹¹.

Owing to the work of widening the runway at Kai Tak Airport, planes had been forbidden to take off and land between mid-night and 8:00a.m. since October, 1970. Because plane flights at night cause sound pollution to Tai Hang Tung, the People's Committee strongly opposed the night flights which might soon happen again after the completion of the widened runway in 1973. It therefore cooperated with the Conservation Association and hung banners on which was written "Absolutely oppose to night flight" (堅決反對夜航), "Night Flight seriously affects our work and rest" (夜航嚴重影響我們作息), and "Night

flight disturbs us, it's unreasonable" (夜航擾民, 實在無理). Finally, the Government announced on 23rd May, 1973, that on completion of the widened runway, night flights would still be forbidden between 11:30p.m. to 8:00a.m.¹².

When the new Housing Authority was set up in the same year, all commercial tenants were notified to sign a new tenancy contract. This was objected to by all commercial tenants in all housing estates including the Tai Hang Tung Estate. About 4,000 tenants joined in the petition to the Government Secretariat and the Governor¹³. Their action forced the Housing Authority to postpone the contract-signing. In this issue, the active participation of the group of commercial tenants proved to be fruitful.

In October 1973, the THTPC had decided to open a study room at St. Peter's Church every evening with two members of the THTPC, two parents, several senior student tutors and one community worker on duty. The aim of the THTPC was to foster stronger neighbourhood relationships and to strengthen the authority of the THTPC. The study room was demolished in October, 1974, during an urban renewal programme and since then no other suitable place being available, the study room programme had ceased to operate.

Nevertheless, parents, students and the THTPC formed the Tai Hang Tung Education Sub-Committee to take charge of all the educational work of THTPC¹⁴. In July 1974, this education group with the Committee launched a signature drive to urge the Government to provide nine years free education as soon as possible (For details refer to Case II in the next chapter).

When the Government issued the redevelopment plan for the Tai^{Hang} Tung Estate in 1974, redevelopment became the focus of the People's Committee. Seminars and mass meetings were held to request the Government to release the details of the plan. Unfortunately, the Government refused their request. However, the People's Committee did not take any further action because at that time no worker had been sent by the SoCO to lead it. For more than a year, until 1976, the People's Committee stayed functionless. It revived when a worker came to lead it to approach the redevelopment scheme¹⁵.

It was then that the People's Committee changed its name to THTPC. It was still a subgroup of the SoCO. It stated in the "The Voice of Tai Hang Tung" that (1) it was an organization serving the residents and not a profit making body; (2) it was politically impartial; (3) most of the meetings would be held in the evenings and would not

affect the residents' work and; (4) no fees would be charged to their members¹⁶.

A weekly forum was held in each block. Each forum was attended by about 200 residents to discuss their demands. They wanted to pay lower rents in the new estate and the tenants with less than two family members wished to be resettled properly.¹⁷ The THTPC prepared the "Evaluation and Criticism on the Public Housing Redevelopment Policy" to attack the profit-making rent policy of the Housing Authority¹⁸. It organized a seminar on redevelopment on January 2, 1977. Conflict with the Housing Authority arose when their banners were moved away by the Housing Authority. After a long period of negotiation, the Housing Authority agreed to have a meeting with the THTPC. This implied that the THTPC had at least achieved recognition from the Housing Authority. (For details refer to Case 3 in next chapter).

In addition to its concern with the redevelopment issue, the THTPC organized some educational recreational activities and welfare services for its people. It also organized campings, tours and a carnival. Each group of the THTPC was responsible for a certain service. Thus, the Community Health Month Project was undertaken by the Community Health Group, the Consumers' Group supplied goods at a lower market price, volunteers from a post-secondary college gave tuition to the child residents, the youth service group assisted the residents in applying for Public Assistance and

and the free funeral service offered by the Tung Wah Group. Some representatives also attended the Symposium of the Hong Kong Council of Social Service on Redevelopment of Public Housing on December 19, 1976 to give their opinions and advice on housing policies to the Council.

Housing policies set by the Housing Authority affect all public housing estates in Hong Kong. The Housing Authority became the common target, with which the tenants would negotiate. The THTPC joined the residents of nine other estates in holding an Open Forum of Public Housing Policy and became a member of the Public Housing Rent Policy Action Committee¹⁹.

When some of the residents of the Tai Hang Tung Estate moved to the Nam Shan Estate in September 1977, they found that the new buildings were inefficient. There were flaws in the walls and the drainage was bad. The THTPC suggested that the tenants negotiate with the Housing Authority.

In November 1977, the Nam Shan People's Committee was set up. Its members were all ex-members of the THTPC. It was also a subgroup of the SoCO. The THTPC and the Nam Shan People's Committee together edited "The Voice of Tai Hang Tung". They held the Community Health Month Project and other activities jointly, and eventually, the two Committees merged into one and became the Tai Hang Tung and Nam Shan People's Committee²⁰ (hereafter also as THTPC).

At the end of 1978, the CDO, Sham Shui Po, and the Salvation Army Tai Hang Tung Branch co-organized a carnival for the residents of Kowloon Tsai. They had agreed together that any organization invited had to be approved by both in advance. The CDO promised to sponsor several hundred dollars for each stall. One and a half hours before the opening of the carnival, a CDO staff member found that the THTPC had been invited to operate a stall without any notification to the CDO. He then informed the Salvation Army that the CDO would not allow any unapproved stall to participate in the carnival and that it would not sponsor any stall unless the unapproved one was cancelled. The decision was conveyed to the THTPC by the Salvation Army staff. Finally the THTPC agreed to carry on running the stall as a subgroup of the Salvation Army, too.

The next day the THTPC and the SoCO complained to the City District Commissioner's Office and Umelco against the CDO, Sham Shui Po. They accused it of "discrimination" and of being "bureaucratic". They demanded an explanation from the City District Commissioner and asked Umelco to bring up the role of voluntary organizations in the Legislative Council. The CDO reiterated that the THTPC had no legal status because it had not registered in accordance with the Societies Ordinance and so it could not be recognized by the Government²¹.

According to the advice of Umelco, the THTPC started to apply to be registered as a society independent of SoCO. In mid 1979, the registration was accepted, but by that time members of the THTPC were demanding that the Committee be restructured. They wanted to be registered as a limited company because they disliked being under the monitorship of the Police Force, which is one of the conditions of a registered society.

Finally, the THTPC was registered as the "Tai Hang Tung and Nam Shan People's Committee, Company Limited" on 11th January, 1980. It has thus become independent of SoCO but assistance from SoCO staff would continue²².

Organisational Structure

The Tai Hang Tung and Nam Shan People's Committee has undergone many changes during the last nine years. Starting as the "People's Committee for Improving the Living Environment of Tai Hang Tung Estate" it changed the "Tai Hang Tung People's Committee" and then to present title. Apart from the changes in its the title, the structure of the roganization has been altered, too. In this section, we will review the organizational structure under each title. In other words, the three organizational structures will be described chronologically in the following paragraghs.

i) The People's Committee for Improving the Living Environment of Tai Hang Tung Estate

The Committee was set up in a seminar on 17 February 1973 with the help of two community organizers. It consisted of 30 representatives from all 14 blocks of the estate. The Committee was considered as a subgroup of SoCO which gave it support and legal status. The word "representatives" did not mean that they were elected by the residents of the 14 blocks but that they were the ardent residents who had merged in various issues. The organization had no clear division of labour. Only two subgroups were formed. One was the Commerical Tenants' Group which was established on May 15, 1973 to deal with the possible problems in future redevelopment. The other was the Education Group which was founded in 1974 by tutorial class students and their parents to deal with educational problems in the community. The direction of the organization was issue-oriented. Once the issue was resolved, the participants would disperse. Some of them might rejoin the organization when there was a new issue. Even the community newsletter "The Voice of Tai Hang Tung" was edited for them by SoCO. No formal procedures of entry and election were set. At this stage, we could say that the People's Committee was a loosely-structured organization. (see Chart 9)

ii) The Tai Hang Tung People's Committee (THTPC)

Since 1976 the Redevelopment scheme has stimulated a higher participation of the residents. They became more aware of their community problems and their ability to change them. Proposals were made to relevant government departments. Through their participation and concern in redevelopment, the Committee widened their scope of activities from the issue-oriented projects ^{to} the service of different aspects of life such as education and recreation. Several subcommittees were set up. Because of the diversification and widened scope of its activities, the structure of the Committee became more and more complex. It laid a basis for further development of the organization.

In 1976, the Committee was renamed "Tai Hang Tung People's Committee" (THTPC). Administration of the THTPC was divided into three levels. Representatives of the Committee were elected from the residents. Meetings of the representatives were held bi-monthly. A standing committee was set up in December 1977 as the policy-making body to which 17 members were elected half-yearly. The standing committee was divided into four sub-groups which met monthly. In January 1978, an Executive Committee was established to carry out activities decided by the standing committee and the committee of

representatives (see chart 10). Each sub-group of the standing committee shifted duty on a monthly cycle. The sub-group on duty should attend a weekly meeting .

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In addition to these administrative bodies, groups of 12 blocks were set up during the period from September 1976 to April 1977. They aimed at improving the living environment, organizing recreational activities, providing assistance for facilities that needed help, motivating residents' participation in the activities of the Committee. These groups formed the information network of the THTPC.

There were several working groups serving various functions (see Chart 10). They were recreational group, financial group, redevelopment study group, group of co-operation, community health group and editorial group. The recreational group planned and organized recreational activities for the whole estate. The financial group formulated the financial policies and planned the budget of the THTPC. It was the treasurer of all working groups. The Redevelopment study group studied the current housing policy and made suggestions for the THTPC. After visiting some of other groups of co-operation and making a half-year plan, the THTPC formed the group for co-operation to sell daily goods at cheaper prices so as to serve the tenants and also to get income. THTPC Initiated by a doctor, a community health group was also established

to promote the consciousness of the residents. It helped to lessen the insufficiency of medical services in the Estate. The editorial group was responsible for editing and publishing "The Voice of Tai Hang Tung".

In addition to the six working groups, there were two ad hoc groups, the redevelopment groups of affected blocks and the issue on vacant rooftops of Mark I and II. The former group fought for the Rehousing Allowance and the rights of splitting households. It also provided information for the residents. The latter group aimed at opening the vacant rooftops for study rooms with a small garden and for recreation.

Furthermore, affiliated groups such as the group of youth service and the children's choir were formed. Members of the group of youth service met weekly. They meant to enhance social consciousness of the youth through holding recreational activities and helping the needy. The children's choir practised singing, dancing and learning handicrafts weekly. The THTPC wanted to teach the children to know more about their community through song, dance and play²⁴.

iii. The Tai Hang Tung and Nam Shan People's Committee
(also as THTPC)

When the legal status of the Committee was challenged by the CDO in late 1978, the THTPC started to register as a society. Later, as we have seen, it registered as a

limited company in January 1980. Because of the regulations governing the formation of limited companies, the THTPC now had a more formal organizational structure, and its constitution was set. Terms of office and the membership fees were fixed; records of membership were kept; an executive committee and a superintendent committee were elected and some honorary consultants and an advisory committee were appointed, too.

In addition, the Committee also set out some official goals at this time. It claimed that the Committee was a non-profit-making body whose purposes were²⁵:

- (1) to work for the welfare and rights of the residents;
- (2) to increase residents' participation in community service activities;
- (3) to provide inquiry and consultant services on housing and other aspects;
- (4) to enhance the mutual-aid spirit;
- (5) to convey public opinion concerning improving the community services to the government and relevant departments;
- (6) to provide members and their families with all or part of the following kinds of assistance --
 - a. Monetary relief for disease, accidents, disability and other kinds of assistance passed in the general meeting,

- b. pension for the bereaved families and
- c. knowledge and advice on legal matters.

In February 1980, members' entry forms were distributed to the representatives in both the Tai Hang Tung and Nam Shan Estates. On March 15, 1980, the first general Congress was held at the Wah Yan Restaurant. About 100 people, including guests, members and residents attended. At the Congress, 17 members were elected as members of the executive committee, 6 were appointed as members of the advisory committee. The urban councillors, Mrs. Elsie Elliot and Mr. Tsin Sai Nin, together with Mr. Hans Lutz, Dr. L. C. Ding, Mr. Ronald Tang and Mr. Hui Yin Fat from the Hong Kong Council of Social Service and also the Director of the SoCO were invited as their honorary consultants. A week later, there were bye-elections for positions among the members within the executive committee and the advisory committee. (see chart 11 and 12). The inauguration ceremony of both committees was held in the Wah Yan Restaurant²⁶.

Accompanying the alteration of the Committee, the role of the SoCO workers in Tai Hang Tung changed, too. When the People's Committee was first established, the people were passive. SoCO stimulated them to be sensitized to their problems, mobilized them to be organized,

encouraged their participation, enhanced their confidence in their own power, and guided them to utilize institutionalized as well as non-institutionalized methods to press the government to improve their living conditions.

During 1975-76, the THTPC nearly collapsed because of the retreat of the SoCO staff. The work of the THTPC was then mainly issue-oriented - once an issue was over, the constituency dispersed. It was not until late 1976, that a full-time SoCO staff member was sent to the THTPC. The problem at that time was rehousing into Nam Shan. This problem stimulated the people to show concern for their community and to take initiative. In addition to mobilizing, stimulating and guiding, the SoCO worker trained the participants to develop critical thinking. In late 1978, the THTPC was fairly stable. People were motivated to work. They began to shift their attitude from self-interest towards social concern. The SoCO worker stimulated and coordinated the representatives to carry out various activities with him as the consultant of the programmes.

Before its independence, the THTPC has already earned part of its expenditure by itself. The source of income included the surplus from recreational activities, membership fees, advertising fees from "The voice of

Tai Hang Tung", etc. SoCO supported it by paying for
the staff and for the actions taken. To-day the THTPC is
independent of SoCO. It expects to get subsidies directly
from external resources since it has already registered
as a limited company.

Chart 9. The Organisation Chart of the People's Committee for Improving the Living Environment of Tai Hang Tung Estate.

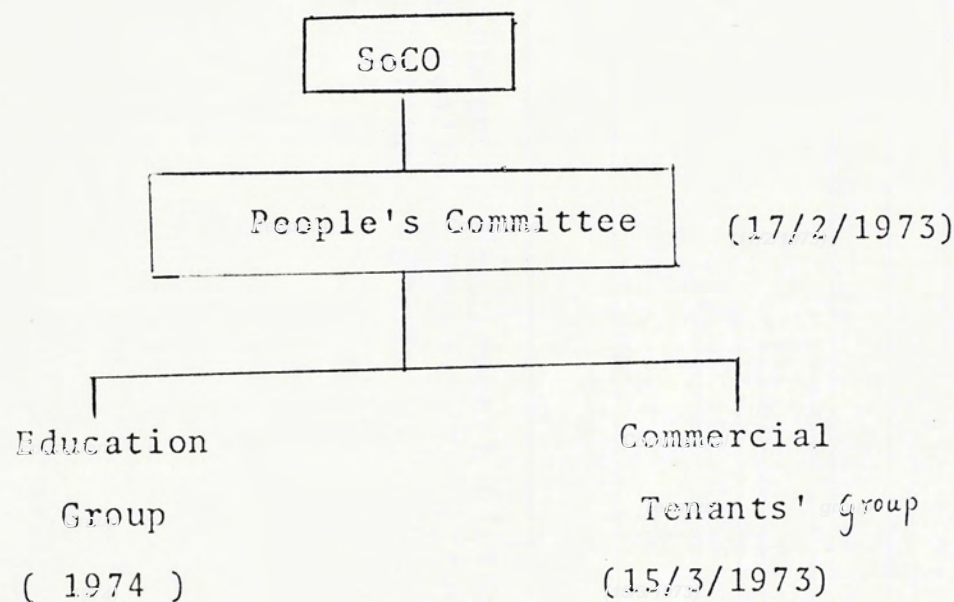


Chart 10

Organization chart of Tai Hang Tung People's Committee.

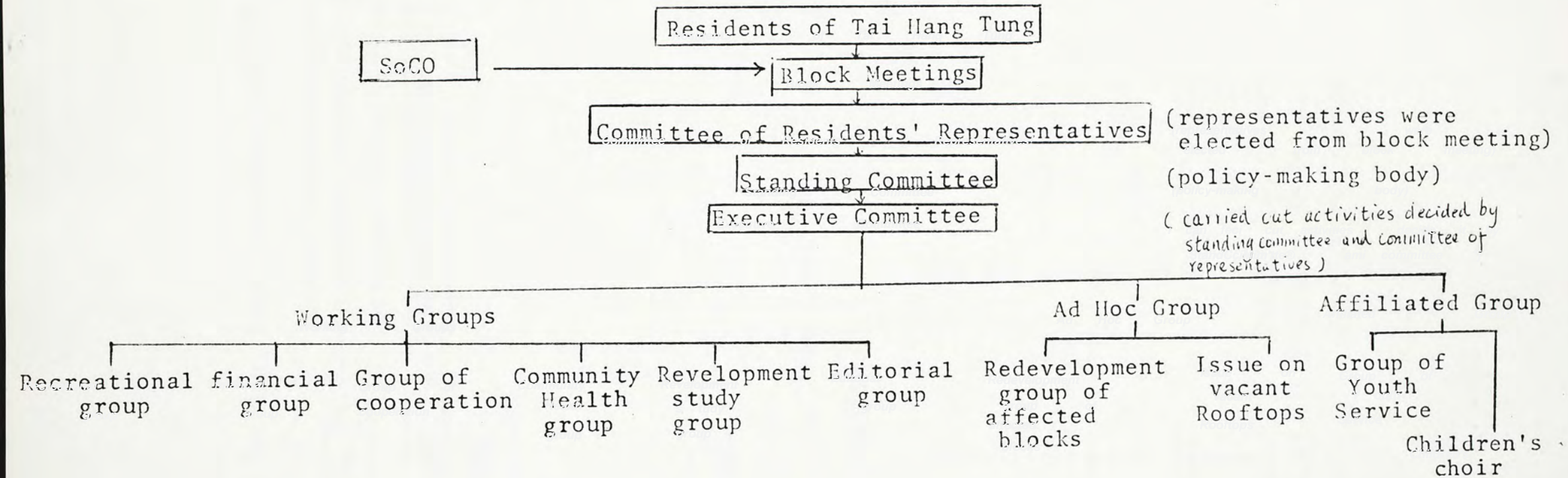


Chart 11.

Organization Chart of Tai Hang Tung & NamShan People's Committee:

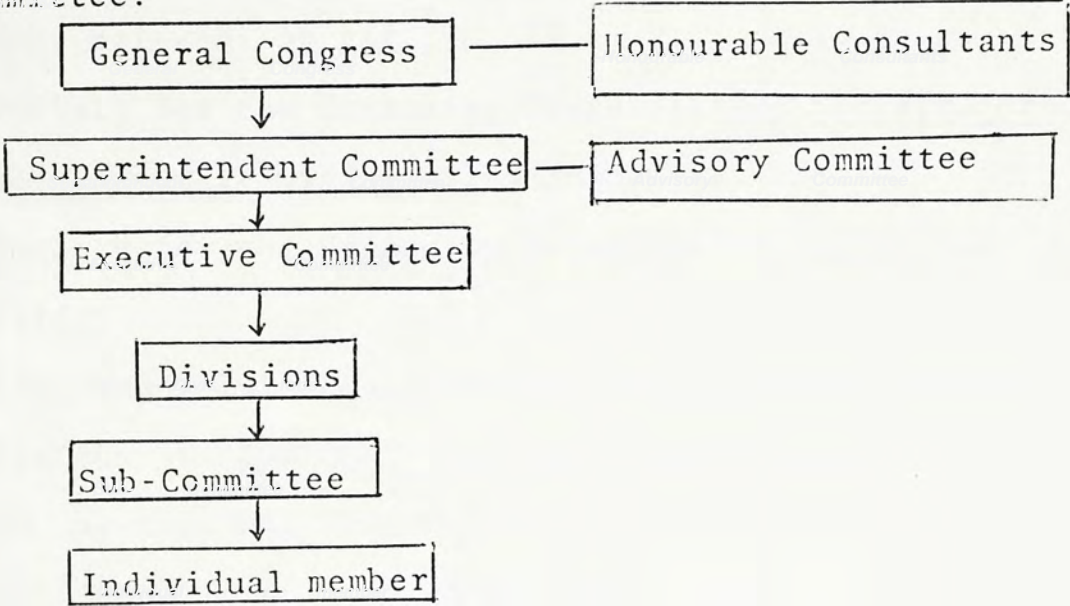
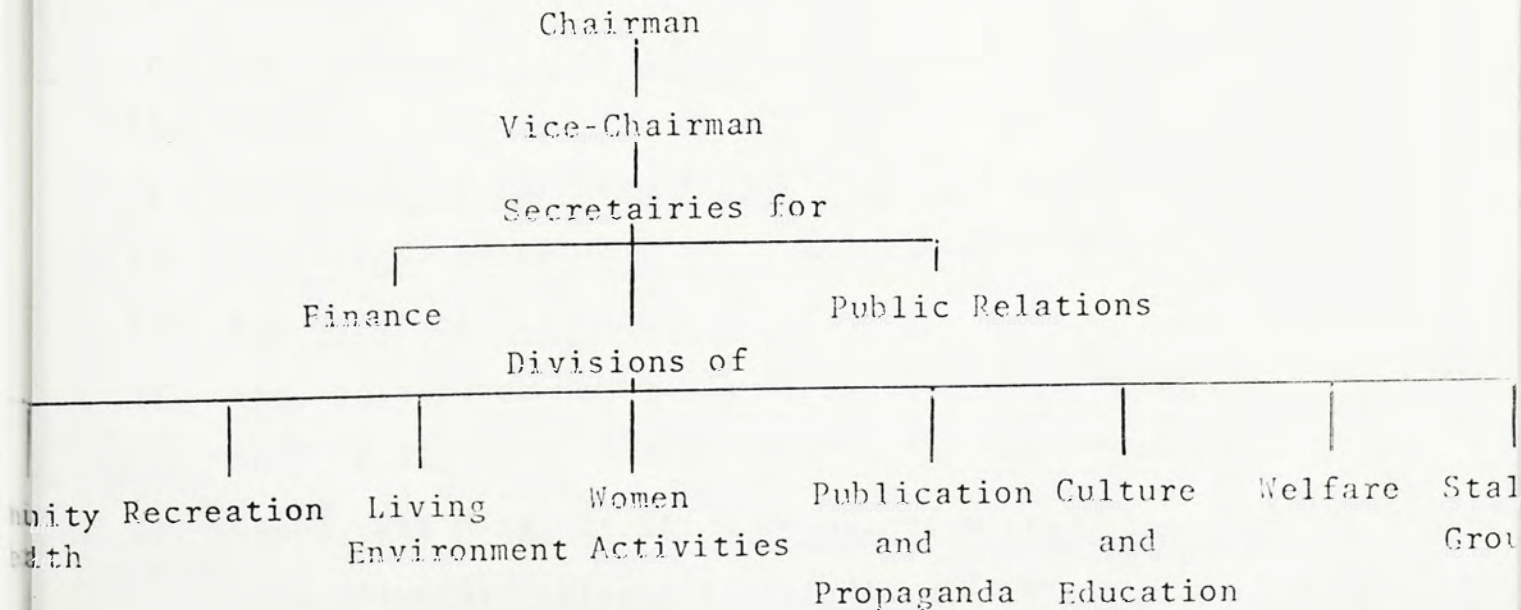


Chart 12.

Organization Chart of Executive Committee of Tai Hang Tung and Nam Shan People's Committee:



Footnotes (Chapter IV. THTPC)

SoCO & KTCO

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17. Ibid.
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CHAPTER V CASES

During the past nine years, the THTPC has been bargaining with the local administration for more and better urban services. After reviewing the evidence I have classified the objects for which the THTPC has been working under the following four headings : -

(1) local environment betterment (2) local policy alteration (3) Societal environment betterment and (4) societal policy alteration. One example is chosen from each type for analysing the negotiation technique adopted by the THTPC and the local administration. In this chapter, the four example cases are presented chronologically.

Case 1: The Toilet Incident (Local Environment-betterment)

Block 9 of Tai Hang Tung Resettlement Estate was completed and occupied in 1955¹. It had been one of the oldest resettlement estates in the area. All but one of the fourteen blocks were "H"-shaped blocks which had two public latrines (male and female), located in the cross-piece of each floor. Block 9 was the biggest block in the estate.

It was an "H"-shaped building which consisted of nearly twice the area and the number of residents compared with the other blocks. Therefore, it was the most densely populated block among the fourteen ones. There were 110 families, comprising 600 persons per floor all of whom had to use two small stalls because the third one had been made useless by the rusty and leaking overhead water tanks. Furthermore, the usable latrines were always silted and flooded. The bad situation usually remained unchanged at least for a few days though the housing officer was often immediately notified².

Inevitably, residents had to queue up or walk up or down for their turns to use the stall. The situation was even worse during the rush hours in the morning. Residents were also angry about the slow renovation. Through talking directly with residents, the workers of the

Kowloon Tsai Community Organization (KTCO) came to be aware that toilet renovation was one of the most urgent problems in the community. In the meantime, these workers located enthusiastic residents and potential leaders for improving the situation themselves.

The workers planned a mass meeting to draw the attention of residents to the problem and lead them to arrive at a possible solution. Before they held the mass meeting, some preparation work was needed and KTCO workers discussed the problem with several enthusiastic residents in some informal meetings. Finally, they worked out four demands for discussion in the coming mass meeting³.

On the evening of 2nd March 1972, more than 100 residents attended the meeting at St. Peter's Catholic Church. At the meeting, residents were encouraged to air their grievances, while the core members raised the four demands and asked whether the residents would agree with them. All participants put up their hands to show that they were in favour of the demands. The residents demanded :

- "(1) that the toilet renovation should be finished within two weeks;
- (2) that the cleansing workers of the Resettlement Department should clean the toilets twice a day;

- (3) that any flooded toilet should be remedied immediately upon receiving telephone complaints from residents and
- (4) that all rusty and leaking water tanks should be restored at once"⁴.

On 6th March 1972, about 40 residents went to the estate office to hand in their demands. An Assistant Housing Manager and a Housing Assistants met them.

The estate office showed documents of approval by sub-contractors who had ordered spare-parts from England but had not received them yet. They explained that this was the main reason why the remedial work could not be completed within a few days. The residents were dissatisfied with this answer because the spare-parts could be substituted by local-made ones. Therefore they petitioned the Resettlement Department as decided in the mass meeting. That afternoon, the 40 residents pressed to actualize their demands in a petition to the Commissioner of the Resettlement Department. Having voiced their demands to a senior staff member of the Department, the representatives handed in petition letter.

On 9th March, over 300 residents held a follow-up report meeting at St. Peter's Church to plan further action. The Resettlement Department sent a letter to the residents informing them that it would attend to the situation.

Since this was not a specific answer, the residents decided to march to the Resettlement Department on 13th March⁵.

At that time, the residents did not worry about whether they would be arrested but some doubted the effectiveness of the march. They even did not calculate the possible number of participants in advance.

However, on 10th March, the Resettlement Department rang to ScCO (the suzerain organization of KTCO) and stated that the Department had accepted the demands. A Government spokesman announced on the radio that the renovation would be done within two weeks, and this was also confirmed by the local Resettlement Department. Thus, the KTCO workers and the representatives of the residents called off the march. A double shift had begun to complete the renewal within the two weeks demanded by the residents. A fortnight later, the renovation work was done, the toilets in Block 9 were being cleaned twice a day and the rusty and leaking water tanks were replaced⁶.

Case 2: The Nine Year Free Education Signature Campaign

(Societal Policy-Alteration)

Free compulsory primary education was introduced in all government Chinese primary schools and in the majority of aided primary schools in September 1971, and in July 1970, the Government announced its intention to provide three years of aided junior secondary education for the age group, 12-14 years old. In August 1971, the financial provisions were approved for the achievement of the first half of this policy⁷, that is, to provide places for 50% of the 12 - 14 age groups by 1976⁸. Under this system, all primary students, on completion of the basic course would be selected for places in government, aided and private assisted secondary schools on the basis of the Secondary School Entrance Examination⁹.

On October 11, 1973, the Board of Education prepared and submitted a Green Paper on Education to the Governor. It suggested that "as an interim measure, sufficient 3-year places for 80% of the 12 - 14 age group should be provided by 1981¹⁰." The Board agreed that the ultimate aim of providing sufficient 3-year school places for all should be retained¹¹, with government assistance for 100% of the 12 - 14 age group, and sufficient 5-year school places, leading to a Certificate of Education in

Government and fully-aided secondary schools, for 40% of the 12-16 age group. Members of the public were invited to make comments on the recommendations listed in the Green Paper before the end of 1973. Even after the official closing date for receiving comments, the general public might continue their discussion on that topic¹².

On May 19, 1974, a forum was held by Ngau Tau Kok Caritas Centre on the "Prospects for Primary School Leavers". Two educators from the Education Action Group (EAG) were invited to deliver a talk on the present trend of secondary education in Hong Kong. About 500 parents of primary six pupils in the community attended the meeting. They participated actively in the group discussion, venting their opinions. Eventually they decided to have another meeting on May 26, 1974.

On May 26, 1974, over fifty attended the meeting at the Ngau Tau Kok Caritas Centre. In the discussion, they realized the seriousness of there being inadequate places in secondary schools for primary students. They decided to set up the "Committee of Ngau Tau Kok Residents on Fighting for Nine Years Free Education." Its purpose was to collect opinions about nine year free education from parents. They embarked on a signature collection campaign and handed the result to the authority concerned. In a

series of meetings, the executive committee decided to organize two propaganda nights, on June 14 and 16 respectively. The Ngau Tau Kok Caritas Centre was invited to give assistance. More than 1,000 participated in these two occasions.

More Committee and executive members were recruited after these events. Originally, the signature campaign was jointly organized by EAG and the Ngau Tau Kok Caritas Centre. Their initial application for a stall in the open space near the bus terminus as a signature centre was turned down by the Police Force, so they changed their plan and decided to set the stall inside the Caritas Centre. However, the authority of Caritas opposed any form of the campaign being organized under the name of an outside organization upon thier property. Hence, therefore, EAG agreed to work incognito.

Between June 21 and 24, a signature collection centre was set up at Ngau Tau Kok Caritas Centre. People who supported the campaign were requested to sign a letter on which three demands were listed: (1) To increase places in secondary schools and put the nine years free education plan into practice as soon as possible. (2) To abolish the Secondary School Entrance Examination. (3) To make adequate arrangements for secondary education for this

year's primary six students. The Committee collected 3,000 signatures within the first four days.

On June 28, 1974, the Committee sent the signed letters to the Education Department. The representatives demanded a clear and unambiguous reply before the end of July. While waiting for the reply, the Committee continued to gather support from residents as well as to plead for similar action from other communities¹³.

On July 4, 1974, thirteen education organizations released a declaration to support the Committee of Ngau Tau Kok Residents on Fighting for Nine Years Free Education. These thirteen organizations, including various educational groups, the student unions of the three College of Education and those of the two universities, requested residents from other communities to give support on the issue¹⁴.

On July 13, the Education Action Group openly advocated the immediate abolition of the Secondary School Entrance Examination¹⁵.

The Education Action Group (hereafter as EAG) was actually founded in 1971. They believe that any improvement in education should be implemented with actions, not just by lip service. Since its establishment, the group has actively involved itself in urging the improvement of standards in textbooks and making comments on the present

educational institutions. It was a rather outspoken organization. The members of EAG included different professional fields, such as university lecturers, school administrators and teachers, social workers and clergy.

Meanwhile, a social workers' organization had been formed by some community organisers from Tai Hang Tung and Tai Wan Shan, some community workers in Ngau Tau Kok and some members of EAG. They often met and talked over social problems though there was no real discussion or agreement in advance on the issue of signature campaign. The social workers in Tai Hang Tung and Tai Wan Shan supported the campaign by just encouraging the residents' organizers to echo it. By the end of July, Tai Wan Shan and Tai Hang Tung residents' organizations initiated a similar campaign. The Tai Wan Shan Community Development Centre and the Society for Community Organization both lent a hand in this issue.

On July 19, the Tung Tau Estate Caritas Centre embarked on a signature campaign to support the Ngau Tai Kok Committee. Twenty-four residents from Tai Wan Shan, half of whom were pupils, presented the ten-thousand signatures to the Education Department on July 24, 1974¹⁶.

In response to the plea from Ngau Tau Kok, supporting social workers talked with the THTPC and the Tai Hung Tung Education Sub-Committee and asked them whether they should join

together to press the Government to provide nine-years free education as soon as possible. The Tai Hang Tung Education Sub-Committee was in fact the product of THTPC's study room programme.

The THTPC and the Education Sub-Committee agreed to launch a signature drive for nine years free education. They held propaganda activities in the estate on July 27. Members of THTPC hoisted banners and put up posters and bills to ask residents to support the campaign.

The next day, a signature collection centre was opened at Sun Sang Restaurant near Route 4A bus terminus. In addition to this centre, members of Youth Group, a subgroup of THTPC, visited all residents' homes and lobbied in the street in order to gain public support in the form of signatures. When some residents insisted that as all their children had grown up they were indifferent to the nine years' free education policy, the representatives and Youth Groups turned to present the possible effects of the present educational system on their grand children. Most of them would not maintain their indifferent attitude and signed eventually. On July 29, the campaign had collected a total number of over 13,000 signatures¹⁷.

On July 30, 1974, 20 representatives of THTPC arrived at the Education Department in Causeway Bay at 10.30 a.m. in order to deliver the signatures collected from more

than ten thousand people and to plead for the early implementation of the nine years free education policy. One of the representatives brought up the fact that children at Tai Hang Tung were seriously denied places in secondary schools. For instance, only one-third of the children living on the third floor of Block 14 could get places in secondary school while the remaining two-thirds had to discontinue their studies because of the poor economic conditions of their families¹⁸. Having listened to the demands, the representatives of the Director of Education promised to hand over the signatures and letter to the Government for consideration.

With the assistance of community workers, THTPC, Ngau Tau Kok Committee, Tai Wan Shan Residents' Committee and the Education Action group (EAG) jointly decided to see the Director of Education, seeking a definite answer¹⁹. On 13th October, 1974, an interview was arranged by EAG. In the interview the Director of Education assured them again that their views would be taken into careful consideration.

On October 16, 1974, the White Paper on Secondary Education in Hong Kong during the Next Decade was published. The aim of the Government was to make subsidized nine years education for every child available by 1979²⁰.

The THTPC deemed the shifting of nine years free education one year ahead to be their victory. It saw the result as an end of a stage and made no further reference to the issue to the residents.

In February 1976, the Financial Secretary announced, in his Budget Speech for the financial year 1976/1977, that it was the Government's intention to provide every primary six leaver with an aided Form I place in 1978 and not in 1979 as proposed in the White Paper on Secondary Education published in October 1974²¹. This meant that the nine years free education policy was actualized one year ahead of the original schedule.

In August 1979, the Director of Education announced details of a new selection and allocation system for Form I places. The main feature of the system would be the allocation of pupils to schools on an area basis and on the results of three internal school assessments monitored and scaled by a centrally administered Academic Aptitude Test²².

On October 5, 1977, the Governor announced in the Legislative Council that from September 1978 onwards, all primary six leavers would get a place in secondary school. The Government would provide the compulsory free junior secondary education and the Director of Education was

Case 11. The mayor issued the following order with the
given powers to order parents to send their children
under 15 to school²³.

Case III: The Banner Issue and the Meeting with the
Housing Authority (Local Policy-Alteration)

All the mark 1 blocks were six or seven-storied buildings constructed between 1955 and 1961. They were usually "H" shaped with communal wash-areas and latrines in the cross piece, though some blocks are "I" shaped. All access corridors or so called balconies run around the outside of each floor. There was a total of 146 Mark 1 Blocks.

Mark II blocks were built between 1961 and 1964. The design is similar to that of mark I blocks, except that they were of 7 or 8 storeys and the ends of the two arms of the "H" were connected by a screen of perforated brick. There are 94 mark II blocks. Up to 1964, there were 240 Mark I and II blocks in 12 estates with 490,000 tenants living in them²⁴.

The buildings were so designed that they could be converted. Each pair of rooms could be turned into one orthodox low-cost flat with private water supply, private toilet and a balcony²⁵.

A polit conversion scheme was carried out in Block 25 of Wong Tai Sin Lower Estate. Block 25 contained some 360 domestic units housing about 2,000 tenants and a number of welfare and educational institutions. In January,

1968, the notice of tenancy termination was issued²⁶.

Residents were to choose between moving to other estates permanently and moving out temporarily but returning to Block 25 when the conversion was completed. By then, the block would contain 202 domestic units.

On the completion of the conversion, a survey of the feelings of the tenants towards their newly converted homes was conducted. It showed that most of the residents enjoyed living in the new environment very much²⁷. The conversion plan was then extended to all the old estates upon this encouraging response.

In 1970, a plan to redevelop the oldest resettlement estate - Shek Kip Mei - was tabled. Some units in nearby Pak Tin Estate were reserved for people who were affected by the Redevelopment Scheme.

In October 1972, the first phase of the redevelopment scheme was carried out. It affected 11,000 domestic tenants, 48 shops, 11 workshops and 2 welfare agencies in 6 blocks. The move of the tenants to new accommodation units in Pak Tin Estate was completed at the end of 1973.

By the end of 1973, the Tai Hang Tung Redevelopment Scheme (hereafter referred to as THT redevelopment scheme) was in hand. The adjacent Tai Hang Sai Cottage Area was cleared in February 1974 to provide a site for

new blocks to be built so as to accomodate those families affected by the first phase of the scheme²⁸.

The THT redevelopment scheme, worked out in August 1974, proposed that all 14 existing Mark 1 blocks in the estate should be demolished and replaced by 12-storied blocks consisting of self-contained units whose size varied from 245 to 285 sq. ft. with private balconies, kitchens, toilets and shower baths.

3 multi-storey blocks would be built on the site of Tai Hang Sai Cottage Area. 2 blocks would be built on the adjacent sites to provide 1,700 living units in 1977 or 1978, while eleven 12-storied blocks consisting of 3,200 housing units would be built on the site of the present site of THT Resettlement Estate. The redevelopment scheme would cause the population density of the estate to decrease from 2,700 persons to 1,700 per acre²⁹.

On 13th October 1974 at 2:00p.m. a seminar on redevelopment was conducted for residents by the THTPC at the Tai Hang Tung community service centre. More than 1,000 participants requested to know such details of the redevelopment scheme as the eligibility for residence, rent, sanitary and environmental conditions. They all wished to be rehoused in nearby estates³⁰.

An information Centre for the Rehousing Scheme was opened at Tai Hang Tung. The Housing Authority had a

meeting with the residents, and several concerned groups to explain the redevelopment project in the estate to them. After working for several months, the THTPC prepared an "Appraisal of Housing and Redevelopment Policy". In the Appraisal, the Housing Authority was charged with not treating public housing as a kind of social services and with siphoning off the interest of the loan for building new estates with high rates. The Appraisal further pointed out that it was not justifiable for the Housing Authority to be administratively subordinate to but financially independent of the Government. Moreover, the Authority should not deny the tenancy rights of married children. They partly demanded that the Government should treat the provision of public housing as a kind of social service and lower the land price and interest rate. In addition, all married children of tenants should be officially permitted to move in to the new estate, losses caused by removal should be compensated, meetings of Housing Authority should be open to the public, (to assure that public opinion could be conveyed at the decision-making level) and new policy, before its implementation, should be issued in the form of a Green Paper, so that it could be corrected by public commentary³¹.

Later, when blocks 1 and 14 were to be converted,

and the tenants were given notice to move out within a few months, the THTPC scheduled a seminar on redevelopment to inform the residents about the Appraisal and to discuss the rights of people in these two blocks.

On 16th December, 1976, a tour to Luk Ken was organized by the THTPC as one of the propaganda programmes of the "Seminar on Redevelopment at THT. On that day, 600 residents took part in the tour, 200 more than expected. During the tour, tape recording was played on the coach to inform the residents of data collected by visiting other redevelopment estates. Residents were reminded that the rent of the new estate might be raised 10 times more than the current rent of \$33.

On 30th December, 1976, the Executive Director of the Consumer Council, the City District Officer of Sham Shui Po and the Director of Housing received an invitation from the THTPC to ^{attend a} Seminar on Redevelopment at THT which would be held On 2nd January, 1977³².

On 28th December, 1976, the CDO Sham Shui Po declined the invitation, stating that it would not be suitable for their staff to attend or give any comment at the Seminar since the Housing Department had not yet reached a final decision on the rent and other related matter. Nevertheless Sham Shui Po CDO would like to receive the agenda and minutes for reference³³.

On 29th December 1976, the Director of Housing also indirectly refused to attend the seminar, the reason for not attending being that his representatives had already attended a symposium on redevelopment held by the Hong Kong Council of Social Service on 10th December, 1976. A good number of residents from the THT Resettlement Estate had been present at the symposium to exchange views with the senior representatives of the Housing Department on both general matters and individual projects. The Director of Housing further assured the residents that he would maintain close liaison with the City District Officer, Shan Shui Po who would continue to pass on relevant information concerning matters of local interest to the Housing Department³⁴.

On 30th December, 1976 six banners were hoisted by the THTPC across the two arms of the "H" shaped blocks in the estates to attract attendance to the seminar. All of the them were made of red cloth on which was stuck white paper with writing in black characters. The first line read "Mass Meeting of Residents on Redevelopment of Tai Hang Tung", the next lines read "2nd January (2:30 p.m.)", then, after a few spaces, "the THTPC".³⁵

On the morning 31st December, 1976, the estate office staff of the Housing Department confiscated five banners

without first informing the THTPC. The only banner left untouched was the one on block 1. The action directly infuriated the THTPC staff. They dialled to the Headquarters of the Housing Department to question them about the confiscation of the banners. Officers at the Headquarters denied that they had instructed the staff of the estate office to confiscate them. Three THTPC representatives arrived at the estate office and demanded an explanation. The estate office used the Headquarters instruction as an excuse for removing the banners. The representatives rejected the excuse and pointed out that the headquarters staff had denied giving such an instruction. Both parties argued on the question without reaching any conclusion. They finally agreed to meet again in the afternoon.

With a view to gaining support from residents, each representative was to mobilize five residents and ask them to attend the meeting too. They also notified reporters. Around 2:00 p.m. reporters of the press and television stations, arrived outside the estate office. More than 200 onlookers stood there too³⁶.

The three Representatives and their "constituents" demanded an apology from the estate office and demanded that the banners be rehoised. Instead of negotiating with the representatives, the estate office requested the help of the police. Six carloads of policemen then arrived. Two hours later, ^{about} 4 p.m. the police finally succeeded in dispersing the crowd. The residents then returned to the

THTPC office to hold an emergency meeting. They decided to hold the seminar as scheduled. That night, at 10:30 p.m.³⁷, 200 residents made 1,000 posters out of newspapers and sixty residents helped to put them up around the estate³⁸.

On the same day, the spokesman of the Housing Authority attacked the residents' action as 'a cheap publicity stunt'³⁹. He said that no posters, or banners could be hung up without permission. Should any person or organization make a request, the authority could provide them with notice boards. In spite of the spokesman's attack on the THTPC, the posters put up on the night of 31st December had not been moved away.

On 2nd January 1977, the seminar was held as scheduled at 2:30 p.m. in the Hall of THT Community Service Centre. 1,200 residents attended the meeting. They requested the Housing Department to send staff to attend the residents' meeting on 16th January 1977 and to explain the details of the redevelopment scheme to them⁴⁰.

On 4th January, 1977 Invitation letters were sent to the Housing Department, the consumer council and the CDO, Sham Shiu Po.

A letter was also sent to the estate office stating that the THTPC would reserve all rights to further investigate and fix the responsibility for the banner issue⁴¹.

On 10th January, 1977 the Consumer Council wrote to the THTPC in reply to their letters of 20th December, 1976 and 4th January, 1977. It refused to send its staff to attend the meeting as the rent policy and financial control of the Housing Department were beyond the scope of their work. The letter also outlined the calculation method of the Consumer Price Index (Type A) upon the request of the THTPC⁴².

On 14th January, 1977 the Assistant Director of Housing replied that the department would consider the points raised in the THTPC's letter in conjunction with the views expressed at the recent symposium organized by the Hong Kong Council of Social Service, and others. He added that as at that time, the Housing Department was still processing the results of the survey to find out the views of the Tai Hang Tung residents which it had conducted in November 1976, it was not necessary for the Assistant Director to attend the meeting⁴³.

On 15th January, 1977 the CDO Sham Shui Po also turned down the THTPC's invitation to send any CDO staff to the meeting since as the Housing Department was still processing the results of the survey, the CDO should not make any comments on that day⁴⁴.

At the end of January 1977, the Housing Authority

released the survey results to the press and printed them in Redevelopment News which is distributed to the residents in the redevelopment estates. The survey had been conducted by the Housing Authority in November 1976. The results from a sample of 1139 households (which was 20% of Tai Hang Tung population), stated that 898 (78.84%) households had television sets, 709 (62.25%) household had refrigerators, 726 (63.74%) households had telephones. Among them, 388 (34.06%) households had all three of these domestic electrical appliances. In addition, 782 (68.66%) householders felt that the living environment of Nam Shan Estate was far better than that of THT estate since the living space in the Tai Hang Tung estate was very inadequate. 96% wanted to live in a self-contained unit, 91% appreciated the anti-burglar facilities provided by the Housing Authority, 12% chose to move outside Tai Hang Tung Estate.

On 16th March, 1977 three representatives of the THTPC arrived at the office of the Redevelopment Section of the Headquarters of the Housing Department and met the staff. They questioned about the arrangements of the rehousing scheme and left a letter to the Director of the Housing Department.

On 18th March, 1977 the THTPC asked the Estate office to return the confiscated banners to them. However, the

estate office replied that they had all been discarded.

On 21st March, 1977 with reference to the discarded banners, the THTPC wrote a letter to the estate office, accusing it of not respecting the residents, and of giving the matter of communication between the government and residents a low priority. The THTPC asked the officers of the Estate office to give them an explanation in writing⁴⁵.

On 25th March, 1977 the Estate office stated that the banners were discarded because they had not been claimed for a very long time⁴⁶.

On 4th April, 1977 a letter was received from the Housing Authority in reply to the letter of THTPC dated 16th March, 1977. The following points were made in this letter:-

- 1) The Authority had not yet set out the rent of the Nam Shan Estate. Residents affected would be notified of the rent about six to nine months ahead of the removal date.
- 2) Needy families would be given allowance by the rehousing scheme. Residents could obtain further information from the "Redevelopment News" which was distributed to all residents on 21st March.
- 3) The Housing Authority, the Home Affairs Department and the Social Welfare Department would organize a joint

exhibition -- "Tomorrow's Kowloon Tsai" by the end of April. The Rehousing Inquiry Centre at Tai Hang Tung would be reopened shortly.

4) There were enough channels to pass on relevant information. Residents with any individual problems could approach the Inquiry Centre for assistance⁴⁷.

On 7th April, 1977 four hundred residents together with some residents from ten others estates and licenced areas went to the Housing Authority and staged a demonstration against the Housing Department. They arrived there with posters written in both English and Chinese and petitioned for participation in the decision-making process of the redevelopment policy. A staff member of Housing Department received the petitionary epistle and promised to hand it over to the executive member of the Housing Authority who would then give a reply to the residents. Two councilors of the Urban Council accompanied the residents to the Department and delivered a talk in support of the resident's action. Finally, however, the residents left the Housing Authority without getting any specific answer. Some of them distributed hand bills at the Star Ferry concourse to raise the public's concern.⁴⁸.

That night the Housing Authority issued a news

relaease concerning the petition. In the statement, the Housing Authority disclosed that (1) according to surveys in 1974 and in December 1976, 88% of residents wanted to move into Nam Shan Estate. (2) the median income in Tai Hang Tung was \$1,612 per family, a figure based on information freely given by the residents concerned. The sample size of the survey was more than 1,000 families. (3) A meeting had been arranged with the TUTPC on 15th April whose representatives were among those people who went to the Housing Authority headquarters to hand in a petition letter concerning the redevelopment scheme and other housing matters. (4) An exhibition would be held on 22 nd April, 1977 in Tai Hang Tung (5) "Redevelopment News" was distributed to residents⁴⁹.

The spokesman informed the reporters that the Rehousing Inquiry Centre was reopened on 7th April. With the assistance of the CDO, Sham Shui Po Housing Department staff had been able to discuss the details of the redevelopment scheme with local organizations in Tai Hang Tung twice⁵⁰.

On the same day the Hong Kong Council of Social Services (HKCSS) asked the Housing Authority to give serious consideration to the two main problems related to the massive redevelopment scheme: (1) The rental problem of the marginally low in-come families. (2) The participation of residents in the decision-making process of the redevelopment programme⁵¹.

On 17th April, 1977 the Housing Authority did not hold a meeting with the THTPC. Only three staff members of the Housing Department, not the top men of the Housing Authority, met the Director and staff of SOCO and discussed general issues related to both parties but not the redevelopment scheme at Tai Hang Tung. Officers of the Housing Department emphasized time and again that it was only a friendly visit, not a meeting. The THTPC accused the Housing Authority of lying to the public.⁵²

The THTPC then held a press conference and disclosed that sixty representatives of the THTPC would distribute handbills at the exhibition on the estate's redevelopment scheme sponsored by the Housing Department on 22 nd April, 1977 to voice their grievance. Members of the THTPC claimed that the Housing Department might not keep their promised regarding the provision of toilets, balconies and other facilities.

Rent was another issue, the representatives said rents for the Nam Shan Estate should be kept at the same level as the new Pak Tin Estate as reportedly promised by officials of the Department at a meeting the previous November. They were also bitter about the Inquiry Centre at Tai Hang Tung, which they alleged, did not provide them with useful information⁵³.

On 19th April, 1977 the Colonial Secretariat confirmed

that the letter dated 7th April, 1977 addressed to the Secretary of Housing had been received. The Housing Authority would give the residents a reply in due course⁵⁴.

On 20th April, 1977, in reference to the letter of 7th April 1977, the Housing Authority stated that individual problems caused by the removal would be considered on their own merits. Rents for the Nam Shan Estate had been set recently and would be disclosed soon. It added that the Nam Shan Phase 1 buildings had a design similar to the new estates in Tsuen Wan, Shatin and other districts where ^{the} design had been well accepted.

On 22nd April, 1977, a notice was sent to Tai Hang Tung residents, advising the overcrowded families to apply for housing units in the Nam Shan Estate before 14th May, 1977. It was also disclosed that the rent for a housing unit of 356 sq. ft. (7- person unit) was \$280 per month and \$310 per month for 392sq.ft. (8-person unit). The exhibition was held as scheduled⁵⁵.

On 23rd April, 1977, residents also handed out pamphlets to people flocking to the exhibition of "Tomorrow's Kowloon Tsai" outside the Tai Hang Tung Community Hall, stating their protest against the new rents fixed by the Estate.⁵⁶

In the meantime, a large number of applicants queued up outside the Housing Department office for places in the new estate. Staff of the Housing Department worked

overtime on Saturday and Sunday to process the application form⁵⁷.

On 26th April, 1977, the THTPC representatives requested the CDO Sham Shui Po to arrange a meeting with the Housing Authority.

These four representatives of the THTPC also approached the Secretary of the Reform Club and launched a similar request. The secretary questioned the representativeness of the THTPC.

In response to the questioning, the THTPC launched a signature-collection campaign⁵⁸. From 26th April to 6th May 1977, forty THTPC representatives visited residents to collect signatures which would be presented to the Department as a protest against the Housing Authority for (1) deleting residents' resettlement right in the name of redevelopment; (2) setting rents according to the profit-making principle; (3) increasing rents at the rate of more than 20% every two years; (4) neglecting public opinion; (5) authorizing a certain decoration firm. The residents demanded (1) that rents be fixed at \$0.43 per sq. ft.; (2) a review of the rent every four years but the increase could not exceed 10% of the existing rent; (3) a promise for all residents in Tai Hang Tung to move into Nam Shan; (4) the right of a married child to live in Tai Hang Tung until an authorized

split; (5) residents should be given free selection of decoration firms; (6) compensation of loss caused by removal; (7) kitchens and toilets should be constructed separately on the balcony and drying racks should be arranged safely; (8) participation in decision-making process in redevelopment. Finally, they agreed to have the THTPC representing the residents to negotiate with the Housing Authority. 2,850 families (representing 20,000 people) had signed⁵⁹.

On 2nd May 1977 the Secretary for Housing replied to the HKCSS that (1) the rental problem was being considered by the Rents Policy Steering Group, (2) residents were in fact invited to participate in the decision-making process on a localized basis⁶⁰.

On 11th May, 1977 the THTPC urged the Commissioner of City District Offices. Kowloon to arrange a meeting for the THTPC to talk with the Housing Department. The THTPC condemned both the Housing Authority and the CDO, Sham Shui Po for ignoring residents' opinions⁶¹.

On 14th May, 1977 the THTPC representatives accompanied by representatives of other local organizations met a Housing Department officer and the Commissioner CDO Kowloon at the CDO Sham Shui Po⁶².

On 17th May, 1977 the CDO, Sham Shui Po informed the THTPC that all questions raised by the THTPC representatives on 14th May would be passed to the Housing Authority which would give the residents a reply in due course⁶³.

On 18th May, 1977, 571 persons' signatures were collected within two hours to support the THTPC. Directors of Home Affairs, HKCSS, Housing and the chairman of Urban Council were invited to speak and make recommendations in the Redevelopment Nite held by THTPC at the football court of the Tai Hang Tung Estate from 8:30 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. on 4th June, 1977⁶⁴.

On 23rd May, 1977 the Director of the Hong Kong Council of Social Service said that their presence at the meeting would not be necessary⁶⁵.

On 24th May, 1977 the Director of Housing gave a reply that he would not be available at the Redevelopment Nite⁶⁶.

Moreover, the Director of Home Affairs was away from Hong Kong on leave. A Senior Executive officer would be attending as an observer but he would not speak or make recommendation⁶⁷.

On 25th May, 1977 the Chairman of the Urban Council replied that his very full programme did not permit him to accept the invitation to the Redevelopment Nite⁶⁸.

The CDO, Sham Shui Po wrote to the THTPC that they would like to get more information about the THTPC

organization, as well as the names, addresses, telephone numbers and official positions of their representatives. Such information, as suggested, would help to strengthen the liaison between the THTPC and the CDO⁶⁹.

On 4th June, 1977 the Redevelopment Nite was held in the playground of Tai Hang Tung Estate. Urban Councilors and residents' representatives delivered their speeches. Different types of drama and singings were presented to satirize the Housing Authority, and to express the demands of residents. Over 1,500 residents attended the Redevelopment Nite. They all agreed that the Housing Authority should provide a Chinese tenancy contract for all tenants⁷⁰.

On 10th June, 1977 the Housing Authority disclosed its views on the various matters raised at the meeting among the Tai Hang Tung representatives, the City District Commissioner for Kowloon and officers from the Housing Department. They were as follows:-

(1) Rents : The recently announced rents for the Nam Shan Estate compared very favourably with those of other new estates and there had been a very good response from tenants who were eligible to apply. Applications for these flats were being restricted to people living at Tai Hang Tung.

(2) Rent Reviews : The view of THTPC that rent increases should be restricted to every fourth year and that the increase was not to be more than 10% of the original rent would be referred to the Rents Policy Steering Group for consideration.

(3) Rehousing of Tai Hang Tung Tenants : Consideration of who was eligible for accomodation would depend upon the normal Housing Authority rules. No wives and children of tenant's children would be allowed to live in the flat.

(4) Decoration of flats : The present procedure had been evolved after trying a number of different methods.

(5) Removal Costs : There was an assistance scheme to provide cash allowances.

(6) Design of flats : Designs used in Nam Shan had proved very popular. Alterative arrangements for laundry drying were provided⁷¹.

Before the THTPC received the letter from the Housing Authority, they had sent letters to the City District Commissioner for Kowloon and to UMELCO office on 10th and 11th June respectively requesting them to talk and negotiate with the Housing Authority in respect of the Redevelopment Scheme in Tai Hang Tung Estate⁷².

On 14th June, 1977, as more than 1,300 families were applying to move in to the new Nam Shan Estate, the Redevelopment Section of the Housing Department invited five local

organizations to send two representatives to take part in the talks on the Redevelopment Scheme at the Nam Shan Estate at 10:30 a.m. on 30th June, 1977. The five local organizations were : the District Committee of Tai Hang Tung, Tai Hang Sai and Yau Yat Tsuen, the Kowloon Tsai Kaifong Association, the Tai Hang Sai Kaifong Association, the THTPC, and the Salvation Army centre at Tai Hang Tung.

On 21st June, 1977 the THTPC questioned whether the meeting on 30th June would cover (1) rental problems; (2) rent incremental ratio; (3) living rights of married children and (4) English tenancy contract⁷⁴.

On 26st June, 1977 the THTPC representatives distributed an open letter to the Governor at the Star Ferry. They pleaded with the Governor to encourage the Housing Authority to discuss the problems related to redevelopment with the THTPC. Later, representatives submitted the open letter to the Governor at his House⁷⁵.

On 27th June, 1977, The Housing Department answered that the questions about (1) rental problems (2) rent-incremental ratio and (3) living right of married children had already been answered by the Secretary of the Housing Authority. Clarification based on the said answer might be given, and tenancy contract could be discussed if time was available⁷⁶.

On 28th June, 1977 the Hong Kong Council of Social Service agreed that the recent request of Tai Hang Tung residents to attend the meeting of the Housing Authority on 30th June, 1977 and to discuss matters related to the redevelopment scheme of Tai Hang Tung Estate was in line with one of the recommendation stipulated in the Council's "Position Statement on Public Housing Redevelopment in Hong Kong". Therefore, the council wished the Housing Authority would give favourable consideration to the residents' request so that the latter would be able to participate in the decision-making process of the redevelopment programmes. This was in compliance with the existing practice as indicated in the Secretary for Housing's reply dated 2nd May, 1977⁷⁷.

When the THTPC representatives knew that the questions raised by them in a letter dated 21st June, 1977 would not be discussed, they refused to attend the meeting⁷⁸.

On 14th July, 1977 the Housing Authority agreed to discuss housing problems with the THTPC. It invited the THTPC to participate in a meeting on 29th July, 1977⁷⁹.

On 17th July, 1977 the THTPC released the survey result of a sample of 61 households which did not register as applicants for units in Nam Shan Estate. It was revealed by the survey that over 80% of them did not apply for

a place at the Nam Shan Estate because of the high rents of the Nam Shan units. 90% of them were afraid that the Housing Authority would increase the rent endlessly. Those who had applied but later withdrew their application were all apprehensive about the possibility of continuous rent increases in future⁸⁰.

On 20th July, 1977, having contacted the local organizations at Tai Hang Tung several times, the Housing Authority decided to appoint some of its members to form an ad hoc group to meet the said organizations individually. The THTPC was invited to send five representatives to attend a meeting chaired by the Group at the CDO, Sham Shui Po at 11:30 a.m. on 29th July, 1977⁸¹.

On 22nd July, 1977, The Housing Authority denounced the THTPC's survey as misleading. Of the 1861 eligible households, 1378 (74.04%) had submitted applications, 161 families had accepted allocated flats, and seven had requested to be re-allocated. Only two of them complained that the rent was too high. Since the application had begun, nobody had withdrawn his application, but the THTPC claimed that only 42% of residents wanted to move to the Nam Shan Estate. "Though different calculating methods are used, it is surprising that the results are such a big contrast" said the Housing Authority spokesman⁸².

The THTPC then planned to march to Government House and hold a poster campaign on 24th July. The action was later called off after the Housing Authority agreed to meet the association. The Director of Social Welfare would also attend the meeting⁸³.

On 23rd July, 1977 THTPC wrote to invite the Secretary for Housing to give a speech at "The THT Nite" on 13th August, 1977⁸⁴.

A reply on 26th July, stated that the Secretary for Housing was on leave so he would not be available to attend the meeting⁸⁵.

On 28th July, 1977, in reply to the THTPC letter of 20th June, the Housing Authority said that the Housing Department had made arrangements for the THTPC to meet Housing Authority members on 29th July, 1977⁸⁶.

On 29th July, 1977, a short seeing-off ceremony was held in the playground of THT Estate when five representatives went to the meeting with the collected signatures⁸⁷.

Case IV : Opening of rooftops (Societal Environment-
Betterment)

Nearly all public examinations are held between May and July every year. Declining academic standards, insufficient facilities for study, inadequate places for tertiary education, and many other deficiencies of the current education system are issues that frequently hit the newspaper headlines. The Education Action Group (EAG) had long felt that the inadequacy of libraries and study rooms had seriously hindered the academic achievement of poor students, and in 1977 they embarked on a survey to review the available libraries and study rooms in public housing estates.

On July 1 1977, the Education Action Group (hereafter known as EAG) carried out a sample survey of 1141 pupils enrolled in primary three, four and five in 12 schools in eight resettlement estates in order to determine the students' feeling on the provision of study rooms. The successful sample consisted of 1111 students. According to the survey, almost 31% of the students reported that excessive noise from television, radio and mahjong games had distracted them from their studies⁸⁸. 46.2% stated that the lack of supervision and tutorial assistance at home made study more difficult. Although there were

11000 places in study rooms in about 40 community centres, and 66.2% of students knew that such facilities were available in their estates, as many as 75.4% did not use them. The reason was that the study rooms were far away from their homes and parents did not like them to go out after dark⁸⁹.

Through interviewing parents and school social workers in these areas, the EAG discovered that many children went to bed at 8 p.m. and returned to their study at midnight when the rest of the family were asleep; others got up at 4 or 5 a.m. to study. And because of the generally low educational level and long working hours of parents, their children were often not supervised or assisted. The EAG recommended that the Education Department should encourage aided primary and secondary schools in resettlement estates to open some classrooms for study in the evenings. The Education Department should pay any additional expenses incurred, and provide funds for utilities and maintenance fees and transport for voluntary workers as well as staff salaries. If this proposal for using classrooms as study rooms at night proved to be useful and feasible, then it should be expended to include more schools in all resettlement estates⁹⁰.

Having released the report, the EAG contacted the THTPC and the Tai Wo Hau Residents' Union (hereafter as TWHRU). This was partly because these organisations were two rather

outspoken local organisations. Moreover, some of the EAG members were familiar with the social workers of these organisations. Since the nine years free education signature campaign, the THTPC and the EAG had kept close contact and shared their views on education problems.

TWHRU was a community development project launched by the Tsuen Wan, Tai Wo Hau and Kwai Chung Ecumenical Community Development Project. The Kwai Chung Ecumenical Community Development Project was established by six local religions bodies in Tsuen Wan in May 1973. These six local religions bodies were : the Church of Christ in China, the Evangelical Lutherans, the Methodists, the Salvation Army, the Anglican Church and the Roman Catholics. They had met regularly since 1971 to discuss the needs and problems of the residents in the district. The leaders of these six local churches also selected their own representatives to exercise supervision over the project. They preserved good relations with the Government in the local community. This community development project was approved by the Government which had given them a flat on the ground floor for use^{as} their office. The EAG's proposal of providing more study rooms for estate students quickly won appreciation from the THTPC and the TWHRU and the THTPC suggested opening up the vacant rooftops for study rooms.

In August 1977, EAG, the THTPC and the TWHRU prepared a report on the uses of ten Mark I and II resettlement estate rooftops. The report showed that 69% of the rooftops were not occupied by people but by rats, wild cats and occasionally gangsters. Their walls and windows were broken. The report listed out the uses of these Mark I and II resettlement estate rooftops as follows⁹¹:

Uses of Rooftop Building

Estates	Empty & Damaged	Youth Centre	School	Total
Hung Hom	2	1	1	4
Lei Cheng Uk	12	2	5	19
Lok Fu	16	2	4	22
Shek Kip Mei (L)*	8	1	0	9
Tai Hang Tung	12	2	2	4
Tai Wo Hau	10	2	5	17
Tsui Ping Road	16	1	7	24
Tung Tau	17	2	6	25
Wang Tau Hom	18	1	6	25
Wong Tai Sin (L)*	16	3	6	25
Total	127	17	40	184

*Lower Estates

These organizations proposed to convert the empty rooftops into (1) study rooms, (2) recreational rooms, and (3) gardens. The reasons were (1) high density. (Resettlement estates were densely populated and had little open space. The crowded living conditions affected residents' psychological and physical well being. (2) noise. (As many residents liked to play mahjong, this produced loud and disturbing noise. However, rooftops were generally less noisy.) (3) Study rooms were too scarce to cope with the needs of the large number of pupils. (4) Security. (Vacant rooftops were often occupied by the gangsters for illegal activities.) (5) Sanitation. (Wild cats, mice and insects found refuge in these vacant rooftops. The conversion would eliminate these undesirable conditions.)

Moreover, the organizations suggested that certain Government Department - namely, the Housing Authority and the Education Department together with the Residents' Organizations should share the responsibility of managing these study rooms. The Housing Authority should (1) open the rooftops to residents, (2) repair the broken walls and windows, (3) provide some basic facilities such as lamps and flower-beds and (4) pay for electricity and maintenance fees. The Education Department should (1) supply voluntary workers as tutors for pupils and (2) pay

for workers recruited by voluntary agencies. The residents' organizations should (1) manage the rooftops, (2) maintain discipline and (3) clean the rooftops⁹².

In September 1977, impressed by the proposal, the MAC of the Lei Cheng Uk Estate Block 19 joined the plea. They met two of the councillors at the Umelco offices and gained their approval in mid October 1977⁹³.

On October 22, 1977, the Secretary of the EAG wrote to the Housing Authority to request a meeting with the said four organizations to discuss the proposal of opening the rooftops of public housing⁹⁴.

On October 23, 1977, the Housing Department announced that a conversion scheme of the rooftops would be carried out to provide 80 self-contained flats of which 48 would be located at the Lok Fu Estate and the remaining 32 at the Tung Tau Estate. When the scheme was completed in the following April, they would house about 400 people who had been living in overcrowded condition. These flats would vary in size from 300 to 470 sq.ft. and would include toilets, washing facilities and kitchens. The project also called for the landscaping of some open spaces on rooftops with benches and flower pots to provide sitting-out areas. The programme would be expanded to other old estates, as they became available⁹⁵.

The EAG, the THTPC and the TWHRU contacted several government departments such as the Social Welfare Department, the Education Department, the Social Affairs Division of the Government Secretariat, the City District Office and the Housing Department to try to persuade them to approve the proposal. All these departments appreciated the idea of opening the rooftops, and they asked the THTPC to hand in their budget for reference. A few months later, the Education Department opened the Government Schools in various public housing estates to provide study rooms at night, but the rooftops remained unopened.

The THTPC suggested that the residents' organization should unlock and occupy the vacant rooftops. The EAG and the TWHRU disagreed, for the residents' power was not strong enough to confront the Authority recklessly. Furthermore, as the Government had already opened classrooms for study rooms, unauthorized occupation of rooftops would only drain the sympathy of public. However, the THTPC insisted on carrying out their suggestion. At that time, the MAC of Lai Cheng Uk Estate Block 19 withdrew due to pressure from the CDO. On April 2 1978, 10 representatives of the THTPC held a press conference on the issue of converting the rooftops into multifunctional places. They reminded the public that nearly 70% of the rooftops of estates were not occupied. They suggested once again that some of the classrooms of the ex-rooftop-schools could be used as study rooms

for students, some could be used as recreational rooms for children, youth and adults. The open space could be cleaned and converted into a garden for all residents to take a break from their biscuit-tin size oven-hot homes. Representatives accused the government departments of shirking their responsibilities - mentionary among them the following departments: Social Welfare Department, Education Department, City District Office and Housing Department. The THTPC asked to have a reply within two weeks, otherwise they would start to sweep and clean one rooftops to provide study sooms and recreation rooms⁹⁶.

The Education Department said that there were enough study rooms in Tai Hang Tung: 2 in secondary schools, 2 in the Community Service Centre, the library of the Salvation Army, and 1 in the Government primary school at Yau Yat Tsuen, therefore, it was not necessary for the government to open the rooftops. In any case, the Housing Department planned to convert the rooftops to living units.

On April 12, 1978, at the opening ceremony of the rooftop living units of Lok Fu Estate, a senior housing manager said taht the pilot conversion scheme had been carried out at Block 11 of Wong Tai Sin Estate and Block 15 of Tung Tau Estate in 1975. Since the project was well received by the tenants, the Housing Authority had decided to carry out similar projects

at Blocks 16, 22 and 23 of Lok Fu Estate and Blocks 6 and 17 of Tung Tau Estate. At present, the conversion of 48 rooftops in 3 blocks in Lok Fu Estate to living units was completed. All units were self-contained and larger than the standard size of the estate units. Furthermore, the Housing Authority planned to extend the scheme to other Mark I and II estates⁹⁷.

On April 13 1978, ten days after the press conference, 4 organizations wrote a letter to two Umelco councillors. They complained that the Department concerned, which had granted them an interview and acknowledge the significance of the proposal the previous year, had actually gone back on their words since they claimed that there were enough study rooms in Tai Hang Tung and refused to consider the recreational function of the vacant rooftops. The organizations, therefore, hoped that Umelco could look into the matter as soon as possible⁹⁸.

On April 17 1978, the Social Welfare Department replied to the THTPC in a letter that in the Education Department's view, there were sufficient study rooms in the area. Nevertheless, if there was a real demand and the institution could guarantee strict supervision over the use of the rooftops and the sufficient financial support needed the Department would authorize the operation of rooftop rooms⁹⁹.

On April 28 1978, the organizations asked for the opinion of the Social Welfare Department itself on the diversified functions of using rooftops. They wanted to know what was happening to the other functions of the rooftops they had suggested besides the provision of study rooms, and the inquired as to the meaning of "financial support needed" mentioned in the Social Welfare Department recent letter. They demanded a prompt response from the Department¹⁰⁰.

In addition to sending a letter to the Social Welfare Department, the THTPC phoned the Housing Department to inquire about the opening of the rooftops on Block 8. The Housing Department replied that the Department approved the idea and it had been planned that Block 8 of Tai Hang Tung would be repaired for utilization.

Later, when the repairs were finished, the Housing Authority informed the THTPC that Block 7, 8, and 9 would be redeveloped shortly. On seeing that it was not worthwhile to spend a large sum of money on decoration as this rooftop would shortly be rebuilt, the THTPC decided to abandon the original proposal.

Footnotes

(Case I : Toilet Incident)

- (1). H.K. Government, Annual Departmental Report of Resettlement Department 1954 - 1955. Appendix II.
- (2). Lam, Wendy Pui-fong. "Community Organization at Tai Hang Tung Resettlement Estate : The Toilet Issue" in Community Development Resources Book, 1972, ed. by Community Development Division of Hong Kong Council of Social Service, H.K.:H.K. Council of Social Service, 1972. P.1
- (3) One interviewee told me that these core members were identified since they had participated in the "Low Clothes Drying Racks Issue". (For details of the Issue, see p.66) According to records, the Dry Racks Issue happened between November 1972 and February 1973. In other words, the Toilet Incident preceded the Dry Racks Issue. Thus, I cannot accept that the core members of the former issue were located because they had joined the action of the latter issue. The opposite may be true.
- (4) Voice of Tai Hang Tung, #1, February 15, 1973.
- (5) Lam, op cit, p.1.
- (6) Ibid, p.2.

Footnotes

(Case II ; Nine Years Free Education Signature Campaign)

(7). Hong Kong Government, Departmental Annual Report of Education Department 1971-72, p.12

(8). Ibid.,p.3

(9). Ibid.,p.2

(10). Board of Education, Report of the Board of Education on the Proposed Expansion of Secondary School Education in Hong Kong Over the Next Decade, August 1973, H.K.: Government Printer, October 1973. p.11

(11). Ibid., p.11

(12). Wah Kiu Yat Pao, between January and May 1974.

(13). Community Workers' Newsletter, (now Grassroots) V. 8-9, April/July 1974, p.3

(14). Wah Kiu Yat Pao, 5.7.1974. p.7.1

(15). Ibid., 13.7.1974. p.3.1

(16). Ibid., 19.7.1974. p.3.4, 25.7.1974,p.3.1

(17). The Voice of Tai Hang Tung, #10, 4.10.1974

(18). Wah Kiu Yat Pao, 31.7.1974, p.3.2

(19). The Voice of Tai Hang Tung, #10,

(20). Hong Kong Government, Department Annual Summary of Education Department 1974-75, p.2

(21). Ibid., 1975-76, p.1

(22). Ibid., 1976-77. p.2

(23). Hong Kong Government, Departmental Annual Report
of Education Department 1977-78, p.1

Footnotes

(Case III ; Redevelopment Issue)

(24) Hong Kong Housing Authority Annual Report 1974-75, p.9

(25) H.K. Government, Annual Departmental Report of Resettlement Department 1954, p.133

(26) Though the Annual Departmental Report of Resettlement Department of 1970-71 said that the Block 25 of Wong Tai Sin Lower Estate was converted in 1967, the Annual Departmental Report of Resettlement Department of 1967-68 gave no words on the conversion (see p. 24-27).

The conversion scheme for Wong Tai Sin first appeared in the Annual Departmental Report of 1968-69 (p.30).

(27) B.V. Williams and Y.K. Mok, "Redevelopment of Public Housing Estates" in Wong, Luke S.K. ed., Housing in Hong Kong : A Multi-Disciplinary Study, H.K.: Heinemann, 1978. p.314

(28) Hong Kong Housing Authority, Annual Report 1973-74, p.14

(29) Tai Kung Pao, 6.8.1974.

Housing Authority, Press Release, 16.1.1976. and 2.3.1976. It seem somewhat strange that in the interviews, the CDO staff, the Housing Department staff and even the representatives of THTPC all said that the original redevelopment scheme planned that 11 blocks would be demolished and the remaining 3 blocks would be converted in order to rehouse

those who chose to live there or those were not able to afford the new rents in the new estates. As a matter of fact, the current redevelopment project is just the same as what they described.

(30) The Voice of Tai Hang Tung, #11, April 1977.

Tai Kung Pao, 14.10.1974.

(31) The Voice of Tai Hang Tung, #14, January 1977.

(32) Letter from the THTPC, 20.12.1976

(33) Letter from the CDO, Sham Shui Po, 28.12.1976.

(34) Letter from the Hong Kong Housing Authority, Ref. HD 32/8/271/74. 29.12.1976.

(35) Tin Tin Daily News, 1.1.1977. South China Morning Post, 3.1.1977.

(36) In his thesis, Fung Ho-lap reported that there were 4,000 persons gathered outside the office (p.55) while the Sing Tao Jih Pao reported the number as some 100 (1.1.1977). The representatives of the THTPC said that there were over 400 persons. Here the figure 200 has been adopted since the figure was presented in The Voice of Tai Hang Tung (#15) which was the official newsletter of the THTPC.

(37) Sing Tao Jih Pao, 1.1.1977

(38) The Voice of Tai Hang Tung, #15, June 1977.

(39) H.K. Housing Authority, Press Release, 31.12.1976.

- (40) The Voice of Tai Hang Tung, #15.
- (41) Letter from the THTPC, 4.1.1977.
- (42) Letter from the Consumer Council, 10.1.1977.
- (43) Letter from the H.K. Housing Authority, Ref. HD
32/8/271/74, 14.1.1977.
- (44) Letter from teh CDO, Sham Shui Po, 15.1.1977.
- (45) letter from the THTPC, 21.3.1977.
- (46) Letter from the H.K. Housing Authority (Tai Hang Tung
Estate Office), 25.3.1977.
- (47) Letter from the H.K. Housing Authority, Ref. HD
32/8/271/74, 4.4.1977.
- (48) Wah Kiu Yat Pao, 8.4.1977.
- (49) H.K. Housing Authority, Press Release, 7.4.1977.
- (50) Wah Kiu Yat Pao, 8.4.1977.

Footnotes

- (51) Letter from Hong Kong Council of Social Services,
Ref. IR 4-6-3 (CUC) 7.4.1077.
- (52) Letter from the THTPC, 11.5.1977.
- (53) South China Morning Post, 18.4.1977.
- (54) Letter from Hong Kong Housing Authority, 22.4.1977.
- (55) Letter from H.K. Housing Authority, 22.4.1977.
- (56) Hong Kong Standrad, 24.4.1977
- (57) Hong Kong Housing Authority, Redevelopment News,
June 1977.
- (58) Tsui, Kim-Ling, "Why Petition?", An Address in the
Second Anniversary General Meeting of the Council
of the Public Housing Rent Policy. 12.4.1981.
- (59) The Voice of Tai Hang Tung, #15, June 1977.
- (60) Letter from the H.K. Housing Authority. Ref. HOU
7/6474/75. 2.5. 1977.
- (61) Letter from the THTPC., 11.5.1977.
- (62) Letter from the City District Commissioner, Kowloon,
15.5.1977.
- (63) Ibid
- (64) Voice of Tai Hang Tung, #15.
Letter from the THTPC, 18.5.1977
- (65) Letter from the H.K. Council of Social Service,
23.5.1977.
- (66) Letter from the H.K. Housing Authority, 24.5.1977

- (67) Letter from the Housing Affairs Department, 24.5.1977.
- (68) Letter from the Urban Council, 25.5.1977.
- (69) Letter from the CDO, Sham Shui Po, 25.5.1977
- (70) The Voice of Tai Hang Tung, #16, December 1977.
- (71) Letter from the H.K. Housing Authority, 10.6.1977.
Ref. L/M in HD 32/8/271/74.
- (72) Letter from THTPC. 16.6.1977.
- (73) Letter from H.K. Housing Authority, 14.6.1977.
- (74) Letter from THTPC. 21.6.1977.
- (75) The Voice of Tai Hang Tung, Special Issue, August 1977.
- (76) Letter from Housing Department, 27.6.1977.
- (77) Letter from the H.K. Council of Social Services,
28.6.1977.
- (78) Letter from THTPC., 28.6.1977.
- (79) The Voice of Tai Hang Tung, Special Issue, August 1977.
- (80) Wah Kiu Yat Po, 17.7.1977.
- (81) Letter from the H.K. Housing Authority, 20.7.1977.
- (82) Wah Kiu Yat Po, 22.7.1977
- (83) Hong Kong Standard, 23.7.1977
- (84) Letter from the THTPC., 23.7.1977.
- (85) Letter from the H.K. Housing Authority, 26.7.1977.
- (86) Letter from the H.K. Housing Authority, 28.7.1977.
- (87) The Voice of Tai Hang Tung, Special Issue, August 1977.

Footnotes

(Case IV : Opening the Rooftops)

- (88) South China Morning Post, 2.7.1977. According to Sing Tao Jih Pao July 1 1977, 42% of students were both being disturbed and lacking supervisor.
- (89) Sing Tao Jih Pao, 1.7.1977. South China Morning Post, 2.7.1977. Wah Kiu Yat Pao, 27.10.1977. and 16.12.1977.
- (90) South China Morning Post, 2.7.1977.
- (91) Education Action Group (EAG), Tai Hang Tung People's Committee (THTPC) and Tai Wo Hau Residents' Union (TWHRU), "Proposal of Using Resettlement Estate Rooftops. August 1977," (Mineographed)
- (92) Ibid.
- (93) Letter to two Umelco Councillors from EAG, THTPC and TWHRU, 13.4.1978.
- (94) Letter to the Housing Authority from EAG, 22.10.1977.
- (95) South China Morning Post, 24.10.1977.
- (96) Tai Kung Pao and Ming Pao, 3.4.1978.

- (97) Ming Pao, 13.4.1978.
- (98) Letter to two Umelco Councillors from EAG, THTPC.
and TWHRU, 13.4.1978.
- (99) Letter from Social Welfare Department, 17.4.1978.
- (100) Letter from THTPC., 28.4.1978,

CHAPTER VI POWER TACTICS : A TENTATIVE COMPARISON OF THE CASES

From Chapter III, we learn that in addition to the THTPC, there are some other local organizations in Kowloon Tsai. On tracing the history of the THTPC, we find that THTPC seldom cooperates with other local organizations. On the contrary, it works in tandem with organizations outside Kowloon Tsai such as the EAG, the TWHRU... to provide more and better services. Why is that so? And how has THTPC been able to gain a foothold in Kowloon Tsai where a number of local organizations have already established themselves.

The goals, the reference group(s) of an organization and its relations with the Government are the major determinants of its strategies and tactics. In the case of THTPC, they also hinder the cooperation between the THTPC and other local organizations.

Now, let us take a look at the organizations (excluding the THTPC) found in Kowloon Tsai and their relations with the THTPC.

Firstly, there are the Nam Shan Kaifong Association and Kowloon Tsai Kaifong Association. These two are neighbourhood organizations whose precepts are "to help each other in guarding against enemies (守望相助); to share

joys and sorrows (休戚相關); to help each other through thick and thin (患難相扶) and to change customs and mores (移風易俗)¹." Like many traditional overseas Chinese institutions such as Hui Guen (會館 District and Dialect Associations), Shang Hui² (商會, chambers of commerce), their leaders are manily trademen. They are social and charitable organizations providing both tangible and non-tangible services to their members. The Government encourages the establishment of Kaifong Associations and regards them as a form of social control. In their eyes, assisting the Government to maintain law and order is one of their responsibilities. They said with regret that only 20-30% of that when the association was in its golden age. Moreover, the overwhelming majority of their members is elderly. Recruitment of new members becomes one of the most knotty problems. With the gradual decline in importance of the Kaifong Associations, the Government has proceeded to set up MACs at the grassroot level. Nevertheless, the Government did absorb the leaders of Kaifong Associations as well as the MACs into the Area Committee. For some people, positions in local organizations provided the stepping-stones for climbing up the social ladder. Thus^s these Associations would not confront or enter the coalition of antagonizing the Government.

The leader of these two Kaifong Associations describe the THTPC as a troublemaker with whom they would not cooperate. Ironically, they agree that this minority body is able to maintain a certain pressure on the Government.

To the Association, the THTPC is their competitor since they compete with each other for clientele. If the THTPC is too weak, it will fail to organize the tenants and it will not be necessary for the Associations to cooperate with it. If the THTPC is powerful enough to mobilize residents, cooperation with it would only strengthen it more. Discord among the organizations is thus predictable.

Next comes the Salvation Army. As an international religious organization, it is a preaching and service-oriented body. Social reform is not its goal. Though it lent space to the Kowloon Tsai Community Organization (KTCO), which was a community project of the radical group SoCO, for its office and invited the THTPC to operate a stall at its carnival, it can almost be a sympathetic group but not a comrade of the THTPC.

Similarly, although St. Peter's Church sponsored part of the KTCO's finance and vacated rooms for KTCO, its

support stemmed from a few priests only and not from the religious body as a whole. One "radical" priest complained that he was being discriminated against and isolated by others. This could be evidence that "radicals" are only a minority in the church³. Religious groups usually scrupulously cling to the image of an impartial religious body that has no involvement in politics whatsoever. Therefore, radical actions are very unlikely to happen under the name of the Church.

The MACs are the grassroots organizations formed by and registered under the CDO. They have to apply for registration every year, which means they will be kept under the supervision of the CDO. If the CDO is not satisfied with the work of a MAC, it may refuse the application of the MAC for registration. This structural constraint prevents the MACs from engaging in "radical actions". Here, radical action is defined as action that will be a credible threat to the establishment.

Since these local organizations differ from one another in organizational goal, reference group and relations with the Government, it is only to be expected that there will be little cooperation among them.

The THTPC was established in early 1973. It is a subgroup of the Society of Community Organization (SoCO) which was formed by a group of persons who were interested in community development. From the very beginning, SoCO

refused Government subvention because they realized that its interest and actions would not win the Government's approval and sometimes, it would oppose the Government. If it does not receive Government subvention, the Government cannot bring pressure to bear on it or change its radical policy by employing the tactic of controlling its financial resources, unless it has held any unlawful activities. Financial independence guarantees that it has its own way in running the organization.

THTPC receives financial assistance from The East Asia Christian Conference (now Christian Conference of Asia) and its early connection with SoCO determined its radical inclination to build an Alinsky-type organization which requires the use of conflict strategy. Alinsky described "A People's Organization" as a conflict group. ... (it) is the banding together of a large number of men and women to fight for those rights which insure a decent way of life.... It carries with it the meaning implication of displacement and disorganization of the status quo."⁴

Thus the reference group of THTPC is an Alinsky-type organization. It is the trial product of SoCO. It aims at arousing the social consciousness of the residents through the process of involving them in solving some of the their common problems in the community. In order to

achieve this goal, workers of the THTPC have to be an "objective agitators"⁵ rather than "service suppliers".

Now, let us find out how THTPC managed to establish itself in 1973 during which another influential community project -- the MAC Scheme was also introduced by the Government, and how its presence may influence the functioning of other organizations such as the MAC.

The MAC Scheme was introduced in mid 1973. It started to make itself known to the public where it was first established in private housings to give the Government a hand in promoting the 'Keep Hong Kong Clean' Campaign and the 'Fight Crime' Campaign. That year, was the first time the Housing Authority faced the challenges of organized group demands, for example, the Yau Ma Tei Boat People's petition for permanent public housing, the demand for installation of toilet-doors at Tung Tau Estate and renovation of toilets at Tai Hang Tung. None of these were individual demands or complaints. Initially, the Authority objected to the idea of forming MACs in public housing because it feared that they would become formal bargaining bodies of the residents. Nevertheless, in 1973, tenants of an Estate in the east of Hong Kong Island wanted to form a MAC. The department concerned informed the community organizer about it and asked him to reconsider the application.

In the end, the Estate reached a compromise with its managerial body -- the Hong Kong Housing Society, the organization which looked after the low-cost housings -- and permitted the setting up of a MAC in the Estate. This is one of the earliest MACs found in public housing. In mid 1974, about 5,000 tenants of commercial premises from 24 estates were brought to Government House in 70 touring coaches to make a protest to the Governor against the new tenancy contract. This event indicated that the channels for residents in public housing to air their grievances were inadequate. Since then, MAC Scheme was extended to include the public housings on a large scale.

However, till mid 1976, only 20-30% of Mark I and II estate had MACs⁶. It is explained that these estates are planned to be demolished within a few years, so the CDOs do not want to waste too much manpower in organizing MACs since they may become totally disorganized when the estates are under redevelopment. However, the state of affairs can be explained by a more subtle reason. The CDO, which foresees the possibility of complicated problems such as rehousing allowance, allocation of flats, selection of alternation estates, splitting households, rents etc. arising in the course of estate redevelopment, fears that the residents will make use of the MACs as a bargaining body with the Authority. Therefore, it does not encourage

the setting up of MACs in these redevelopment estates.

Though MACs are formed by residents with the assistance of community organizers from CDO, the election process and the character of the candidates are beyond the control of the community organizers. Usually, organizers visit residents floor by floor to call for a meeting. Residents are free to attend the meeting. So long as 20% of the residents attend the meeting, the MAC can be set up and residents can be selected for positions in it. The defect of this system is that residents living in the same block may not necessarily be acquainted with their neighbours. As a result, outspoken residents are always elected to positions in MAC. If the THTPC staff monopolize the speeches in a meeting, the meeting may have to be called off, or if the outspoken THTPC staff members are elected, the original aim of the scheme may be distorted. Therefore, CDO did not set up MACs at Tai Hang Tung Estate.

Since religious bodies are assumed to be apolitical, making use of space provided by the Church or Salvation Army for office-use and for holding mass meetings can help organizations like KTCO and THTPC to neutralize their radical image. It will thus help the residents to accept the KTCO and THTPC.

Thus, the THTPC was able to establish itself in

an administrative and organizational desert, and to ^{grow} without competition.

The nature of the THTPC's suzerian organization and its financial independence make political absorption impossible. In other words, the Government and its local administration bodies become targets of the THTPC. The THTPC attempts to make its target groups yield to its demands so that it can achieve its goal. THTPC can be classified as an action group which tries to influence other person or groups.

In dealing with the allocation and provision of social services, how do the action group and target group interact? What power tactics do they employ in selecting issues, in competing for constituencies and in negotiating with each other? The four cases in Chapter V are hereinafter used as examples in an attempt to answer these questions.

Before we make the analysis, we have to bear in mind that one end can be achieved by multiple means, and the same means can serve a number of ends; the same principle applies to tactics and strategies. The following example of using one set of tactics in a particular strategy is just for analytical convenience.

To begin with, let us look at the selection of issues.

The 'Selection of issue' is closely related to the characteristics of a community. Consider the Toilet Incident; the physical design of Mark I blocks caused it to be an issue capable of drawing the public's attention. Since the toilets are communal, any malfunction in them affects a large number of people on the floor. Moreover, their communal nature causes them to be more vulnerable to damage resulting from carelessness and frequent usage the malfunctioning of a toilet in the new self-contained estates will only affect one household, except in the case where the pumping or drainage system of the building is broken but that is very rare. Therefore, only when the facilities affect a large number of people will they draw the public's attention.

The same idea applies to the case of the Redevelopment Scheme. This Scheme has effects on all residents. It will change the economic and social condition of the community as a whole. Change, in a sense, means uncertainty. Residents are therefore uncertain about what they can get in the new estates, about the new rents and the possible compensations. Like the Toilet Incident, the Redevelopment scheme is also closely related to the residents' immediate interests and to nearly all the people at once.

The case of Nine Year Free Education was selected for its large beneficiary constituency. According to the

census of 1971, 55.99% of the estate population had attained primary education while only 12.57% had attained secondary education. In other words, residents are rather deprived of secondary education. The Nine Year Free Education Policy benefits all the 37.97% (10,678 persons) of the population who are 0-14 years old. If we assume that each couple has three children, the total number of beneficiaries reached 14,238 persons, that is, 50.62% of the population.

As for the opening of Rooftops, the issue arose from the fact that student children in overcrowded families can hardly find a place to study. The overcrowded living condition is even more serious in Mark I and II buildings than in other types of public housing because of the substandard space allocation. The vacant rooftops of Mark I and II Blocks which some schools had once occupied became available as resources for operating study rooms. On the other hand, rooftops of other types of public housing cannot be used as study rooms or recreational rooms because they are not sheltered. Generally, it is secondary school and the upper classes of primary school students who need the study room; that means students aged 10 or above. They compose 18.09% of the estate population. Apart from study rooms, the THTPC wants to get recreational rooms for their office. So they asked for the opening of rooftops of Mark I and II estates.

Nevertheless, the opening of Rooftops is not a broad enough platform to attract the masses since only 18.09% of the population are potential beneficiaries. It lacks an ardent response from the residents.

Thus, by looking at these cases, we can find that for an issue to be selected, it must be able to attract and involve a large beneficiary constituency. A "beneficiary constituency" comprises those who benefit directly from the resolution of the problem. The demands should be immediate, specific and feasible. Immediate needs and reachable goals drive the constituency to participate in the action.

Besides the "beneficiary constituency", there are "conscience constituency" and "nonconstituency institutions". A conscience constituency is composed of those sympathizers who provide resources but are not part of the beneficiary base. Nonconstituency institutions are those institutions that are available independently of the existence of the issue⁷. Because of the differences in the nature of these three types of "constituency," various tactics are used.

In mobilizing the residents who are the beneficiary constituency, the THTPC usually notifies them of meetings by (1) distributing newsletters (Newsletters

and The Voice of Tai Hang Tung are distributed to every living unit.)

(2) Posting bills and notices (Bills are posted on the walls of the ground floors of each blocks.

(3) Door-to-door canvassing (Door-to-door canvassing is done by the core members of the THTPC who stress the significance of unity for power. Though its limited manpower prohibits the THTPC from canvassing a large number of residents, residents would often attend the meetings or sign to support the issue because usually they are acquainted with these members. Thus group solidarity is the core element in door-to-door canvassing.

(4) Talking on loudspeakers before the meeting is opened.

We can see that with the exception of the issue of opening rooftops which involved only the THTPC but not the residents, the other three cases utilize these methods to notify and mobilise the residents. They distribute newsletter to every lived in flat because there are only 14 blocks, door-to-door canvassing can be used due to two factors: The first is the long period of residence. Most of the residents have lived in the blocks for over 20 years, they all acquainted with all the neighbours who lived nearby. The second actor is the physical design

of these blocks. The communal washrooms located in the cross pieces, the kitchens located along the corridors, and the crowded living conditions, all cause the residents to open their doors for the sake of convenience and better ventilation. It is thus easier for the visitors from the THTPC to approach the residents.

Organizing outings for residents was also used as one of the mobilizing tactics. Lack of spare time and the problem of transportation often inhibit the residents from going on an outing with their families. The THTPC then organized outings for residents at low prices and ^{with the} provision of transport. While the 600 residents were on the touring buses, they could not escape from listening to the tape chosen for broadcasting by the THTPC. Rent, the most sensitive topic, was chosen as the theme of the propaganda. In it, the THTPC warned the residents that there might be a drastic rise in rent in the new estates. Thus, to these residents, the moving touring bus was actually an institution in disguise which performed the function of mobilization.

In the Toilet Incident, the Resettlement Department at first ignored the complaints of the residents but later it tried to pacify the people by giving them no specific answer. Unfortunately, the residents were not only dissatisfied with the condition of the toilets but they were also angry with the Department. They thus planned

a march to the Department as a sign of counterattack. The Education Department remained reticent during the Nine Year Free Education Campaign though it has met the representatives of these resident's associations. In the Redevelopment Issue, the Housing Authority first monopolized the channels of information to residents in the new estates, and minimized any intermediate interpretation of information by the THTPC. Then it made known the new rent and the application procedures in the exhibition which was used as a means of providing information on the new estates to the residents. The long queue of residents applying for new estates outside the Estate Office showed that the residents were eager to move into the new estates. Thus, the offering of new estate units was congruent with the desires of the residents. As we have found out, one significant characteristic of the Tai Hang Tung residents is status-inconsistency. As the residents of Tai Hang Tung were originally fire victims, most of them were low-income people in origin. Now, after some 20 years, their children have grown up and begun to earn a living. Cheap rents and the increase in the number of breadwinners make the family relatively affluent. Although they could allocate their resources to improve their living standard e.g. better clothing, better food and more domestic electricity appliances (please refer to Chapter III P.112), they could

change their living environment which was undesirable, outdated, and substandard. All tenants who have lived in those 7-storey blocks for more than 20 years therefore want a better home. A family of 7-9 members with 5-6 members who are economically active can easily afford to pay a rent of about \$300.

In the opening of Rooftops Issue, the Education Department provided an alternative for solving the problem of shortage of study rooms. After meeting the representatives of the Action Group, it opened the Government schools for study rooms in the evening. As a matter of fact, the physical environment of the government schools is much better than that of the rooftops. The beneficiary constituency could thus enjoy the better alternative and the problem was thus solved.

After discussing the various tactics employed in mobilizing the beneficiary constituency, it is time for us to turn our attention to another kind of constituency -- the conscience constituency. This constituency consists of two groups of sympathizers.

One is the indifferent by-stander public who show no partiality to either side. For the action group, the best method is to rouse the sympathy of the indifferent public to side with them. If this cannot be done, (for

whatever reason), the action group had better keep the public apathetic. So long as they do not side with the target group, they are, in a sense sympathizers.

The other group is anybody or group who expresses his or its sympathy in words or in action. The action group would develop or reinforce their sympathy by providing more information which favours the action group itself or the sympathizers themselves. The four issues can provide examples of the tactics used for this type of constituency.

As we have said, the bystander is the target of propaganda for both the action group and the target group. In order to appeal to the public, both parties "clothe" their behaviour in a "moral" garment. Both the Nine Years Free Education Campaign and the Opening of Rooftops Issues are vivid and genuine examples of this statement.

In both issues, the high-sounding ideal of providing free education to all children was put forth to cover up the inward motives of the THTPC. It said that no children, however poor they are, should be denied the right to free education. The poor academic achievement of the poor children living in the Mark I and II blocks was due not to their low score in intelligence quotient

nor to the problem of the culture of poverty, but only to the noisy environment. Study rooms should therefore be provided for these poor burning-midnight-oil-students. In fact, what the THTPC really aimed at in the Opening of Rooftops Issue was a space for thier own office. That is why they struggled for the right to manage the recreational and study rooms. Nevertheless, not a word about its wish for an office could be in its Proposal, in its speech at press conference or in its official correspondence!

In the Redevelopment Issue, when the residents wanted to add names to the tenancy record, they would accuse the Authority that it did not respect the traditional Chinese virtue--filial piety--in an attempt to win public's sympathy and approval. When they asked for a splitting of the tenancy record to get another living unit, they charged the Authority with overlooking the importance of amity within a family.

The Housing Authority also made use of the same tactic of seeking public support by stressing the principle of "fairness" again and again. The Authority said that it would be unfair to the registered families on the waiting list if the married children of tenants could add thier names to the tenancy record and then ask for additional or bigger living units. The Government department was thus making public appeals when it advocated the

principle of "fairness", since the public housing tenants are actually competing with the public at large for the scarce supply of public housing.

Card-stacking is another tactic used in seeking public appeals. "Card-stacking" is a propaganda technique in which an audience is presented with only those selected facts and arguments that support a particular position. Those facts and arguments that do not support, or that tend to weaken the propagandist's position are ignored or suppressed."⁸

The Hong Kong Council of Social Services' Symposium on the question of redevelopment served to extreme functions for the THTPC and the Housing Authority. The THTPC urged the Authority to let the residents have a say in the decision-making process. It made use of the Position Statement of the symposium to prove to the public that the prestigious social welfare organizations approved their requests. The Housing Authority insisted that they had enough channels for the residents to voice their opinions. In this case the symposium provided an occasion in which senior staff of the Authority were able to meet the Tai Hang Tung residents and listen to their views on redevelopment.

As for the Opening Rooftops Issue, the

Authority released news about the conversion of vacant rooftops of Mark I and II to living units for the overcrowding families in the estate. The units were described as commodious and self-contained. When the overcrowding families moved into these newly converted flats, their original living unit would be vacated for families on the waiting list. Tenants of Mark I and II blocks and the general public would benefit more from the conversion of rooftops to living-units than from their conversion to study rooms. Moreover, their children could make use of the classrooms of the Government school nearby for study. They therefore chose to support the Department. Nevertheless, in the Rooftop Issue, the Housing Authority did not set a date for the complete conversion of all rooftops. As a matter of fact, only a few rooftops have been converted. The remaining rooftops remain vacant.

Scientific accomplishment in various fields is so impressive that statistics (a scientific method) are often also utilized in propaganda. Statistics are used to show one's authoritativeness and representativeness.

"Scientific" appeal is often an effective tactic in winning over one's potential constituency. The Housing Authority's survey on the economic status of the Tai Hang Tung Estate residents showed that residents' economic status was not as poor as it was described to be in the THTPC's survey. Their living standard in terms of durable goods owned indicated

that they were sufficiently well off to be able to pay the higher rents in the new estates.

The survey results of the THTPC and the Authority on the application of Nam Shan Estate provided^a a mixture of Card-stacking and scientific appeal. The THTPC claimed that 80% of residents did not apply for Nam Shan housing because of the rocketing rents in Nam Shan and 90% feared that the rent would increase endlessly. The Housing Authority refuted this allegation by claiming that 74.05% of the eligible tenants had already submitted their applications and only two complained that the rent was high. Thus, the THTPC wished to accuse the Authority of high-rent policy while the Authority struck back by saying that the residents' response had proved that they could afford the new rent.

In actual fact, both parties obtained their survey results from different samples. The THTPC's sample consisted of those who did not apply and the Authority's of those who were eligible for application. Furthermore, the THTPC did not make known their sampling method which would determine whether the result could be inferred to the whole estate. Both the THTPC and the Authority laid great stress on the percentages in an attempt to attack each other's authoritativeness and representativeness.

Celebrity is an advertising technique as well as a political propaganda in winning over the conscience constituency. Influential persons are invited to attend the mass meetings. For a beneficiary constituency, (here the residents) the presence of the celebrity will boost their confidence since they feel that these socially renowned personalities are on their side. The influential persons, on the other hand, also benefit themselves in the process for they may win over the masses who are their future potential constituency. Their presence may be reported in the news as the mass meetings are often newsworthy. This in turn, enhance their celebrity.

In these issues, we can also find that ^{non-}constituency institutions are not neglected. The THTPC fully utilized the available institutional channels to persuade the Government. There are eleven ways for public to express their views. They are :

"(1) opinions encountered in the course of official business, particularly by officers in frequent contact with the public such as District Officers, City District Officers, Labour Officers, Housing Managers etc. (2) Surveys carried out by CDOs or the Government Information Services. (3) Letters to Government departments and petitions made to the Governor. (4) Letters to newspaper, editorials and reports of meetings. (5) Discussion Programmes or talks on radio and television,

and comments made by public who phone in. (6) Remarks made to Government officials at social gatherings. (7) Officials contacting leaders of pressure groups, kaifongs and rural committees. Delegations to Government Departments. (8) Formal meetings of advisory committees and boards. (9) Speeches made at meetings of the Legislative Council, the Urban Council and the Heung Yee Kuk. (10) Personal representations and complaints received by the Umelco office, ward offices of the Urban Council, and at enquiry counters of CDOs. (11) Demonstrations, strikes and riots."⁹

Since the THTPC is not politically absorbed into the advisory committees or boards and none of its representatives are councillors, they can contact the CDOs, Umelco office, and the ward offices of Urban Councillors. Usually, however, the THTPC contacts the department concerned directly. Once it fails to get satisfactory answers from one Department, it will immediately turn to other departments to keep its target group under pressure. For example in the Redevelopment Issue, when the THTPC was not granted a meeting with the Housing Authority, it turned to the CDO which is always put on the side because of its non-executive nature, to the quasi-ombudsman -- the Umelco Office, which is authorized to investigate the complaints related to all government

departments, to the Governor who is the highest responsible person in the Colony. In the Opening Rooftops Issue, the THTPC also asked the Umelco office to help them to arrange a meeting with the Housing Authority.

The creation of an unfavourable public image of its target group can embarrass the opponents. In the Toilet Incident, the residents publicized the disgusting sanitary conditions of a public housing estate and thus embarrassed the Government since the Government itself has been promoting the Keep Hong Kong Clean Campaign. It discredited the Government in that it failed to practice what it preached, By inviting officials to attend the mass meetings to discuss improving the toilets and the redevelopment scheme, the THTPC forced the Government to be confronted with a dilemma. If the officials attended the meeting, they would be asked to comment on and give a definite answer to the questions raised by the residents. If they shied away from the meeting, they would be accused of dodging the problem and lacking sincerity. The Housing Authority was charged with lying to the public when it said that had arranged to meet the THTPC to discuss the Redevelopment scheme actually it was not the THTPC that it met with but its suzerian organization, SoCO. In turn, the THTPC was slammed for its "misleading" survey.

Neutralization of the opponent's impact can be seen in the Redevelopment Issue. The Housing Authority invited

leaders of ALL local organizations to meet its staff. On the one hand, the invitation can be described as consulting the public opinion, on the other hand, the invitation succeeds in levelling the status of the THTPC to that of the other local organizations in the community.

It can be seen that a clever fighter exerts both strength and skill. Only when the action group possesses power will its target group negotiate with it.

Thus in the case of Tai Hang Tung Estate, as seen from the occupation distribution and the achieved education of the people in Tai Hang Tung, we can say that most Tai Hang Tung Estate residents are lower or lower-middle class people. Their political resources are limited, they cannot alter government policies in administrative level to benefit themselves, nor can they afford to withdraw the offer of political support since the Government is not an elected government. The Government is accountable to the British Government not to the people of Hong Kong. Furthermore, as a locality-based neighbourhood organization, it cannot make credible threat such as a disruptive strike, tax strike, or boycott while violence is never used, since it would drain the support of public to the side of their opponents. The size of the constituency is one resource of power. Their situation and resources limit the list of available tactics. Having won over constituencies, the action group have to show

its power to its target group, e.g. by petitioning, making special pleas, embarrassing and disrupting the routine work of the department concerned.

In the four cases, the THTPC showed its power in different ways. Petitions and mass meetings were used in the Toilet Incident and the Redevelopment Issue. Mass meetings serve several functions. Firstly, they can boost the confidence of the constituency. The massive attendance gives them a feeling that they are backed by a large number of people. Such bandwagon effect would attract some bystanders in the public to join the movement. Secondly, the representativeness of the demands will be upgraded if they are passed in the meeting. Thirdly, the meeting reminds the target group that the action group has massive support.

A petition can draw the attention of the public to a particular issue, on the one hand, and create visible disruption, on the other hand. A petition itself represents conflict and discord and provides good "copy" for news-reporting. The keener the conflict, the more newsworthy it will be. The lawful nature of petitions is a bit ambiguous. In the Annual Report for 1977, petition is listed as a way to air one's grievances¹⁰. But at the same time, the Public Order Ordinance restricts the number of a gathering to 3 (now 10) persons, otherwise it would have to seek permission from the Police Force.

In those times, the THTPC did petition both the departments concerned and the Governor without making any application. In other words, according to the law the authority can take action against petitioners. Nevertheless, since the Yau Ma Tei Boat People and the Blind Workers had successfully petitioned the responsible departments without getting themselves involved in troubles, people did not consider it as a risk. The authority's tolerance minimizes the cost of petition.

Another means to claim that the masses agree and support one's demand is the "signature drive". In the Nine Year Free Education Campaign and the Redevelopment Issue, the THTPC collected signatures as an indicator of power to negotiate with the authority. Compared with mass meetings which are fixed at a certain time and place, a signature campaign is more flexible. The campaign can last for a longer time and can be carried out in various occasions and places. Signatures can be collected in the residents' homes, on the street, at the signature centre etc. Another more important thing it is that to sign a signature is less costly in terms of time, money and risk than to take part in a mass meeting or a petition. Mass meetings are often held in the evening and usually take one 2-2½ hours. At the time

for meetings, residents are still exhausted by a day's hard work and would rather have a rest. On the other hand, a petition takes at least half of a working day. For most residents, if they join the petition, they will have to ask for unpaid leave or have to pay for a substitute for themselves. In addition to monetary loss, they take the risk of being charged for illegal assembly.

In the Opening Rooftops Issue, the THTPC, by holding a press conference, attempted to draw public attention and posed a threat to the Housing Authority. Unfortunately, the futile press conference which was orchestrated by the THTPC clearly exposed the cleavage among the action groups.

We can find that different tactics involve various costs. Petition is the most costly, mass meeting the second, signature the least. The Toilet Incidents and Redevelopment Issue are immediate, have a wide affected, and can hardly be substituted, while the Nine Year Free Education Campaign and the Opening Rooftops Issue are intermediate, impact confined and substitutive. The characteristics of each issue limited the THTPC in its choice of tactics. The more urgent the issue, the higher the cost the beneficiary constituency would have to pay.

If the service scope of an issue were community-wide,

it would be essential to gather together all interest groups in the related communities. Communities connote physical locales as well as the functional communities. A coalition of action groups can strengthen on another and pool resources together. Strengthening one another could scare an antagonist into thinking that any attack would invite the allied member to strike back jointly. By sharing relevant information at hand, the coalition can portray the situation more accurately which will then help them to formulate appropriate strategies for action.

However, the cleavage among the action groups in the Opening Rooftops Issue highlights the fact that once the action groups consist of diverse interest groups, it is more difficult for them to reach a compromise on the demands and action tactics. The EAG demanded that the Education Department should provide study rooms, but the THTPC asked for office space and management right. The THTPC suggested occupying the rooftops, but the EAG and the TWHRU disagreed with such "militant" tactics. In other words, the more diverse the action groups, the less likely will the militant tactics be approved.

When a target group is confronted with action group(s), negotiation among them will often take place. However, the target group seldom immediately bargains with the action groups because it is not sure whether the power possessed by the action groups is worth bargaining

with. Therefore, usually the target group would at first ignore the protests of the action groups. If the action group is too weak to mobilize resources to exert pressure on the target group, the target group can defuse the tension by adopting an indifferent attitude towards the action group's outcry. If such a tactic does not work or the effect is not satisfactory, the target group would employ the delaying and 'buck-passing' tactics. Bargaining will only ^{be} applied when ignoring, delaying and buck-passing tactics do not work. In both the Toilet Incident and the Nine Free Education Campaign, instead of ignoring tactics, delaying tactics were used. In the Toilet Incident, when the undesirable sanitary conditions of the Estates were disclosed, ignoring the significance of the issue on the part of the Government would only violate the basic human rights of the residents. It would rouse the public's discontent against the Government. Therefore, delaying tactics were used instead. On the other hand, the actual focus of the Nine Years Free Education Campaign was not pivoted on the problem of "should" or "should not" but of "when". The Government agreed that providing nine years free education was the ultimate goal whereas the residents' organizations insisted on having free education as soon as possible. In this case, the Government was employing the delaying tactic since it agreed to provide free education to the people but gave

no definite answer as to the date of implementation of the scheme.

Most action groups are ad hoc groups, they are weak in unity and persistence. Take for instance the Opening Rooftops Issue : it involved only a small mass of people, and the participant organizations were diverse in their interest. Once a participant organization's demand is satisfied, the coalition will face the danger of dissolution. Thus, when the Government satisfied the EAG's demand but not the THTPC's (by providing study rooms in Government schools) the protest of the THTPC failed to attract much attention, especially as the public at that time had their attention focused on the Precious Blood Golden Jubilee School affair.

In contrast, the Redevelopment Issue had a large beneficiary constituency including the Tai Hang Tung Estate residents and a potential constituency who were the tenants of Mark I and II estates. The Redevelopment Scheme was so immediate to the residents that ignoring and delaying tactics used by the Government would only create rather than suppress their feelings of uncertainty and anxiety. The discontent of such a huge number of people would pose a threat to social stability. Hence, the Housing Authority makes a concession to meet the demands of the THTPC. The meeting,

however, does not necessarily imply that the residents can really participate in the process of decision-making, its function would be restrict to an exchange of views only.

Based on the above analysis, we may conclude that there are several factors which limit the utilization of ignoring tactics in defusing the tension created by a social issue. They are : (1) the powerful mass bases of the action groups, (2) the strong coherence of the action groups (3) the greater stir that may be caused by the use of ignoring tactics (4) the seriousness of the crisis and (5) the ardent response of the public.

In sum, having compared the four cases, we can see that the selection of an issue depends on (1) its broad beneficiary constituency, (2) its immediate, specific and feasible demands. In the bargaining process, the more urgent the issue, the higher the cost the beneficiary constituency would have to pay. The more diverse the action groups, the less likely will the militant tactics be approved and finally, the more apathetic the public, the more likely is it that authority will use ignoring tactics.

Footnotes (Chapter VI Power Tactics)

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CHAPTER VII CONCLUSION

In the last chapter, we have analyzed the tactics which the THTPC and the Housing Authority used in contending against each other. Because the services for which the THTPC strives are always rather clearly defined, it can contact or negotiate with the department concerned directly. The CDO, as coordinated and non-executive body, is always be overlooked by the THTPC. The THTPC makes use of the CDO's official function of bridging the Government and the people only accidentally when they fail to bargain with the responsible department. Being a department which is assumed to be responsible for the community affairs, the CDO has to be involved in the game.

Since the THTPC is under the guidance of SoCO which does not receive any government subvention, the Government cannot compel it to submit by tightening the financial support. Moreover, SoCO opposes firstly the surreptitious bargaining which involves only the Government and a few elites. It insists that organizing people for social action is the only means to raise the political and social consciousness of the people. Secondly, the SoCO resists the administrative absorption¹ which is a system by which the Government coopts the opinion leaders and elites. MACs in the Nam Shan Estate are set up as a counter-

organization in each block to undermine the THTPC. Though the effectiveness of the MAC Scheme may be suspect and some of the MACs exist in name only, the White Paper on District Administration may revive the MACs and the Area Committees. According to the White Paper, the chairman of the Area Committees in the district would be appointed by the Government as the members of the District Board. The District Board is an advisory body to advise on the whole field of administration of each district in the Colony².

In addition to the formation of counter-organizations, the CDO directed the resources of the THTPC to defensive maintenance needs and away from the pursuit of broader goals by compelling them to register as an association independent of SoCO. The registration of an association requires a clear constitution, in other words, the association became bureaucratized and institutionalized. It seems that the institutionalization of an organization would be beneficial to its long-term planning, but, as a matter of fact, the institutionalized organization has to allocate part of its resources to the necessary administrative procedure in order to fulfill the legal requirements.

It seems that the THTPC knows the disadvantage of institutionalization, too. The THTPC did not plan to be independent in April 1978. It was said that the organization was not mature enough to be independent from SoCO because

of the limitations of the consciousness of the residents and the lack of office space. Furthermore, the THTPC feared that once it was independent, the large amount of administrative expenditure that would become necessary would drive it to lose its independence. At the worst, it might struggle for survival with the vested interests, and became another type of Kaifong Association.

The current non-hierarchical institution was a means to prevent the said vice of institutinalization. Thus, the THTPC wanted to remain a subgroup of SoCO and avoid being converted into to a Kaifong Association or a MAC under the supervision of the CDO³.

Since the CDO challenged its legal status, the THTPC was obliged to register as an independent association. Independence brings financial burdens as well as administrative ones. Firstly, independent status wipes out the attendance of the SoCO when the THTPC engages in meetings with government departments. Secondly, since the THTPC is a limited company, it is ^{both} symbolically and legally, independent and has to take up legal responsibilities itself. It has to be more careful about their own action.

Moverover, since last year, the senior Housing Manager has met the THTPC representatives regularly at the Tai Hang Tung Estate Office in the evening. Sanitation

problems are now solved at the local level. The regular meeting is an institutional channel to pass the opinion of THTPC to the Housing Authority, at the same time, it also minimizes the publicity of the THTPC and belittles its influence. Thus, owing to its ^{of}our bureaucratization and the new availability_^ institutional channels the THTPC has become more mild since its registration.

Organizing some service programme, for example, the Community Health Plan, for the residents would be an effective means to attract the residents, and, at the same time, to consolidate the power base of the THTPC. Yet, in striving for urban services, the THTPC has focused on the needs of the Tai Hang Tung Estate. They would seldom bother themselves about the needs of the Nam Shan estate.

Three-fourth of the old blocks will remain unconverted in the Tai Hang Tung Estate by the end of 1981. As it is being rebuilt residents who lived in these old blocks will decrease year by year. In other words, the beneficiary constituency of the work of the THTPC will diminish. Since the THTPC has done little for Nam Shan in the past, it is quite difficult for the THTPC to put down roots there now. Moreover, the physical environment of the Nam Shan Estate is much better than the Tai Hang Tung Estate. All living

units are self-contained. The sharp contrast intensifies the satisfaction of the new estate. Issues that affect the estate as a whole are likely to be scarce.

From last chapter, we can see that the success of the THTPC was embedded in a certain time and space. Residents living in the intolerable old Mark I blocks were uncertain of their future terms of removal, they had status-inconsistency ..., all these factors fostered the growth of the THTPC. Now, the physical environment and the administrative and political atmosphere have already changed, it is time for the THTPC to reconsider its reaction.

The changing trend not only affects the future of the THTPC, it also has effects on the political strategies of the urban poor in fighting for more and better services. Failing to convey their opinions by institutional channels, the people make petition to the highest authority directly. The effectiveness of the petition has a demonstration effect to all the groups whose members think that they are deprived of certain rights. In the 1970s, petitions become the most effective means for action groups to claim their rights, for the Government was searching for a solution by trial and error.

Petition as a protest tactic marginal to the establishment. It is marginal in the sense that although it is deemed to be a way to express one's opinion to the Government, yet, it is not clear what and when people make use of this channel. Recently, there is a tendency that no matter how trivial or how significant the appeals are the people would petition to the Governor, the Government Secretariat and the departments concerned. As a result, the over-use of the petition tactics leads to tactical fatigue. They are too frequent to arouse the attention of the public. To action groups, petition tends to be a necessary means to air their demands, to the Government, it highlights the realization that if the petition involves only a limited beneficiary constituency, the ignoring tactics would not cause massive discontent. Furthermore, the political climate of Mainland ^{China} to-day reassures the Government that the Left would not intervene in the petition. The Government has thus got a free-hand to deal with these appeals.

In Hong Kong, petition is the last channel for the public to express their views within the establishment. Petitions bypass the bureaucracy to the highest hierarchy. But if the petition ceases to be effective, would the coercive threat be credible? Surely not. From the experience of the riot of 1967, coercive threats can only drain away social support and drive the masses to side with the target group. Therefore, if an action group is weak in its power

base it can do nothing in the face of ignoring tactics.

As the effect of petitions wears off as they become institutionalized, the action groups face the dilemma that failure in calling for a petition reveals their weak power base, but an ineffective action frustrates their constituency. Thus a reconsideration of the tactics of social action is needed in 1980s.

Since there are limited sympathetic constituencies the action groups have to rely on themselves. The coalition of communities will enlarge and strengthen their power bases. Here comes the problem of the selection of issues. Joint actions depend on (1) a common interest of the communities and, (2) the topic which should be immediate to drive the people to participate. As the living environment is improved, there are fewer and fewer problems that affect the estates as a whole. Thus, the working focus shifts to the licensed areas and squatter areas where the residents are more deprived of services than the public housing estates residents and it is easier for workers to choose the communal problem to mobilize the people.

The Nine Years Free Education Signature Campaign and the Opening of Rooftops Issue reveal that social workers played a significant role in initiating the coalition. Apart from the selection of issues, the concordance of the

cooperation became a problem. There may be discrepancies arising in the demands and the course of action between the clientele and the workers, the workers and the agencies. Moreover, the government subvention hinders the free choice of the agencies. There is no such a thing as free lunch. When the subsidized agencies join the coalition, they have to consider the possible pressures from the Government.

Internal discord may emerge among the clientele, workers, and the agencies. The clienteles from various communities may differ in their experiences while the worker may debate the strategies and tactics. Various agencies operate projects in different communities, certainly they are not identical in their organizational goals, reference groups and funding bodies. Thus, it is quite difficult for the action group to reach a satisfactory compromise.

The coalescent action of communities is now in its embryonic stage, I hope that those who are interested in this field will study these problems in future.

Footnotes (Chapter VII Conclusion)

(1) The concept of political absorption was introduced by Dr. King. King, Ambrose Yeo-chi, The Administrative Absorption of Politics in Hong Kong with Special Emphasis on the City District Scheme, H.K.: Social Research Centre, CUHK, 1973.

(2) Hong Kong Government, White Paper on District Administration in Hong Kong, January 1981, H.K.: H.K. Government Printer, 1981.

(3) Wong, Chek-kei, "Tai Hang Tung People's Committee" in Pang Bai, April 1978. p.2.

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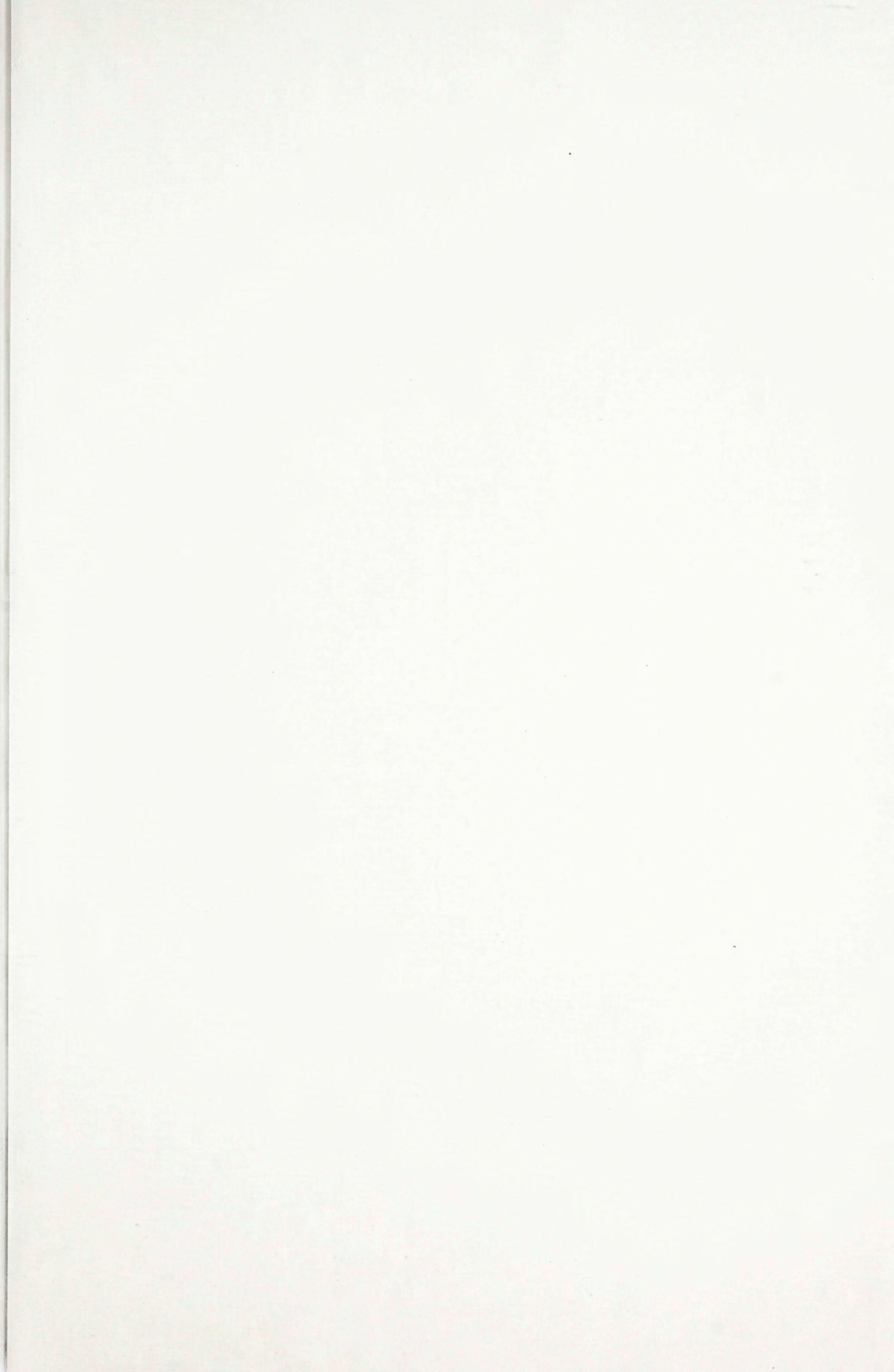
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